"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE EDITION
Today, abundant sunshine, high 75. **Tonight**, dry with a clear sky, low 58. **Tomorrow,** mostly sunny, high 76. Weather map appears on Page B12.

VOL. CLXXII .... No. 59,801 © 2023 The New York Times Company NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 27, 2023 $4.00

KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Long Meetings, but Still No Debt Limit Deal

Speaker Kevin McCarthy on Friday. As negotiators try to wrap up an agreement, the situation is growing painful for everyone, even tourists on Capitol Hill. Page A16.

MANY AMERICANS SUDDENLY LOSING MEDICAID ACCESS

PANDEMIC POLICY ENDS

Over a Dozen States Are Dropping People for Technical Reasons

By NOAH WEILAND

WASHINGTON — Hundreds of thousands of low-income Americans have lost Medicaid coverage in recent weeks as part of a sprawling unwinding of a pandemic-era policy that prohibited states from removing people from the program.

Early data shows that many people lost coverage for procedural reasons, such as when Medicaid recipients did not return paperwork to verify their eligibility or could not be located. The large number of terminations on procedural grounds suggests that many people may be losing their coverage even though they are still qualified for it. Many of those who have been dropped have been children.

From the outset of the pandemic until this spring, states were barred from kicking people off Medicaid under a provision in a coronavirus relief package passed by Congress in 2020. The guarantee of continuous coverage spared people from regular eligibility checks during the public health crisis and caused enrollment in Medicaid to soar to record levels.

But the policy expired at the end of March, setting in motion a vast bureaucratic undertaking across the country to verify who remains eligible for coverage. In recent weeks, states have begun releasing data on who has lost coverage and why, offering a first glimpse of the punishing toll that the so-called unwinding is taking on some of the poorest and most vulnerable Americans.

So far, at least 19 states have started to remove people from the rolls. A precise total of how many people have lost coverage is not yet known.

In Arkansas, more than 1.1 million people — over a third of the state's residents — were on Medicaid at the end of March. In April, the first month that states could begin removing people from the program, about 73,000 people lost coverage, including about 27,000 children 17 and under.

Among those who were dropped was Melissa Buford, a diabetic with high blood pressure who makes about $35,000 a year at a health clinic in eastern Arkansas helping families find affordable health insurance. Her two adult sons also lost their coverage.

Like more than 5,000 others in the state, Ms. Buford, 51, was no longer eligible for Medicaid because her income had gone up. A notice she received informing her that she did not qualify made her so upset that she threw it in a trash can.

But a majority of those who lost coverage in Arkansas were dropped for procedural reasons.

Daniel Tsai, a senior official at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services who is helping to oversee the unwinding process for the Biden administration, said

Continued on Page A14

A Tax Incentive Opens the Door For Fraudsters

By ALAN RAPPEPORT

In early February, federal prosecutors in Utah accused Zachary Bassett and Mason Warr of cheating the United States government out of millions of dollars. The accounting firm they operated had submitted more than 1,000 fraudulent tax forms to the Internal Revenue Service on behalf of businesses trying to claim pandemic-era stimulus funds, the prosecutors said.

COS Accounting and Tax shut down later that month, leaving businesses and taxpayers who had paid the firm to help them claim federal money trying to figure out what had happened and why they were suddenly receiving audit notices from the I.R.S.

Amid the onset of the pandemic in 2020, as large swaths of the economy went into lockdown, Washington set up various programs to help keep businesses and their workers afloat. Among them was the Employee Retention Credit, a tax benefit that was created as part of the initial $2 trillion pandemic relief legislation. The program offered businesses thousands of dollars per employee if they could show that Covid-19 was hurting their bottom lines and that they were continuing to pay workers.

The money was intended to be a lifeline for struggling companies. Instead, it has become a magnet for fraud, creating a cottage industry of firms that market themselves as tax credit specialists who can help clients — even those who don't qualify for the money — reap huge refunds from the I.R.S.

Although the public health emergency is over, taxpayers can continue to apply for the tax credit until 2025. That has fueled a run for the money and the proliferation of financial service providers, who often charge hefty upfront fees or take cuts of around 25 percent of any tax refund.

The tax credit has become so popular that it is turning out to be far more costly than expected. In 2021, after Congress expanded eligibility, the Congressional Budget Office projected that the credit

Continued on Page A18

Sedition Case Offers Nation Accountability

By ALAN FEUER

NEWS ANALYSIS

A few hours after Stewart Rhodes, the leader of the Oath Keepers militia, was sentenced on Thursday to 18 years in prison for his role in a seditious conspiracy to instigate the pro-Trump violence of Jan. 6, the federal prosecutor who has overseen the investigation of the Capitol attack released a statement with a fact that underscored the landmark nature of the moment.

"More people were convicted of seditious conspiracy in connection with the siege of the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021," wrote the prosecutor, Matthew M. Graves, "than any other criminal event since the statute was enacted during the Civil War."

Nearly two and a half years after supporters of President Donald J. Trump stormed the Capitol in an effort to derail the peaceful transfer of power, Mr. Rhodes's sentencing was the most high-profile statement of accountability yet for an episode that remains a flashpoint in American politics and seems certain to occupy a dark place in American history.

Amid the more than 1,000 criminal cases filed so far by the Justice Department, the prosecution of Mr. Rhodes — for plotting to mobilize his followers into storming the Capitol in two military-style stacks — stood out in a way that was articulated by the judge who sentenced him, Amit P. Mehta.

"Mr. Rhodes, you are convicted of seditious conspiracy; you are a lawyer, you understand what that means," Judge Mehta said Thursday. "Seditious conspiracy is among the most serious crimes an individual in America can commit."

Perhaps for just that reason, sedition charges have been used only rarely over the decades, reserved for select groups of defendants who prosecutors argued uniquely threatened the government.

Sedition cases have been filed

Continued on Page A18

The Right's Love Helps a Texas Official in a Bind

In Impeachment Fight, Paxton Cites Efforts in the Courtroom

By J. DAVID GOODMAN

AUSTIN, Texas — A decade ago, in a courthouse north of Dallas, a lawyer forgot his $1,000 Montblanc pen in a metal detector tray and returned to find that it had been taken. A review of surveillance footage turned up the culprit: Ken Paxton, who was a Texas state senator.

A few years later, Mr. Paxton, by then the state's attorney general, suffered a more serious political blow when he was indicted on charges of securities fraud. Then in 2020, several of his most senior staff members at the attorney general's office accused him of bribery, corruption and abuse of office.

Mr. Paxton has managed to survive it all, in large part because of the key role he has played as one of the most aggressive figures in the conservative legal movement. His challenges to the Obama and Biden administrations and his willingness to contest the results of the 2020 election garnered him the loyalty of Republican primary voters and the endorsement, during his re-election to a third term last year, of former President Donald J. Trump.

"Ken Paxton has served as the tip of the spear on so many of the legal fights about which conservatives care, whether it's immigration or holding the big tech monopolists accountable," said Mike Davis, a former chief counsel for the Senate Judiciary Committee and the founder of the Article III

Continued on Page A15

TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Battle for Bakhmut

Times photographers have been recording the fight for the Ukrainian city for a year. Pages A7-9.

Application Tool Will Let Colleges Hide Students' Race on Forms

Anticipating Limits on Affirmative Action

By ANEMONA HARTOCOLLIS

Each year, the million or so students applying to college through the Common App are given the option to check a box, disclosing whether they identify as Hispanic, Asian, Black or white, among other choices.

Now, with the U.S. Supreme Court expected to rule soon against race-conscious admissions — and with colleges wanting to follow the law — the Common App has made a pre-emptive move on what is known as the "race box."

Beginning Aug. 1, colleges will be able to hide the information in those boxes from their own admissions teams, said Jenny Rickard, chief executive of the Common App, in an interview.

The new option will help colleges comply "with whatever legal standard the Supreme Court will set in regards to race in admissions," Common App said in a statement. A nonprofit, Common App administers a universal application used by more than 1,000 colleges and universities.

The decision, which appears to be aimed at immunizing colleges from litigation, is one of the first concrete examples of how college admissions may be transformed if

Continued on Page A19

INTERNATIONAL A4-12

On Erdogan's Campaign Trail

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is promising to lead Turkey to its rightful place as a global power. PAGE A12

A Hard-Right Turn in Alberta

An election on Monday will test if voters, traditionally among Canada's most conservative, will follow. PAGE A5

NATIONAL A13-19

More Teenagers High in Class

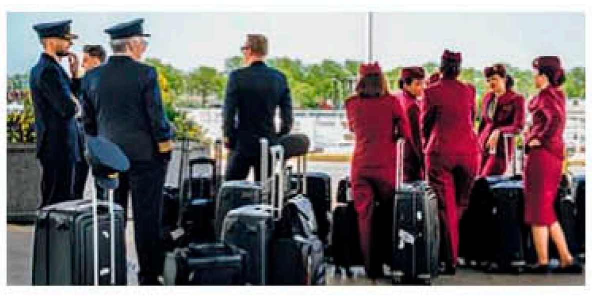
Students and teachers say some classrooms are in disarray as more and younger students are smoking marijuana at school. PAGE A13

Doctor Fined in Abortion Case

Dr. Caitlin Bernard violated the privacy of her 10-year-old patient by discussing the girl's treatment with a reporter, Indiana's medical board ruled. PAGE A14

Donation Pleas Draw Scrutiny

As Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida begins his presidential bid, officials in his administration have asked lobbyists for support, blurring ethical lines. PAGE A19



BUSINESS B1-7

Surviving Summer Travel

After some major meltdowns, airline executives said they were reducing flights and hiring more staff. PAGE B5

Falling Gasoline Prices

On average, drivers are paying a full dollar less per gallon of fuel compared with last Memorial Day. PAGE B6

SPORTS B8-10

Looking to Las Vegas

From faking a rainout game to a possum in a television booth, the Philadelphia-Kansas City-Oakland A's have rarely been happy at home. PAGE B8

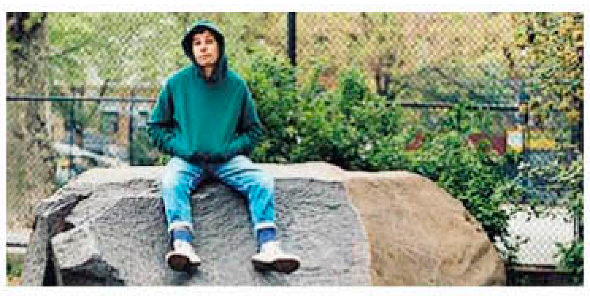
TRAVEL C9-10

An Elegant Backdrop for Fun

Buenos Aires's grand buildings are reminiscent of old Europe, housing everything from a cocktail bar to wild animals to a toilet museum. PAGE C10

OPINION A20-21

Daniela J. Lamas PAGE A21



ARTS C1-8

Want a Reputation as an Artist?

No need to make anything. Darren Bader is selling his name and his practice after two decades of creating witty, poetic sculptures. PAGE C1

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The New York Times

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The Newspaper and Beyond

TODAY'S PAPER

Corrections A16
Crossword C3
Obituaries B11
Opinion A20-21
Weather B12
Classified Ads B10

VIDEO Scientists at Rockefeller University in New York documented behavior in a captive octopus that they said resembles a nightmare: going from resting to writhing and then inking. Do you think it was having a bad dream? Watch the footage at *nytimes.com/science.*

AUDIO Many American voters in both parties regard the other side as extremists. On "The Run-Up" podcast, the host Astead W. Herndon talked to two congressmen — a Democrat and a Republican — about the roles they play in the fight. Listen in at *nytimes.com/therunup.*

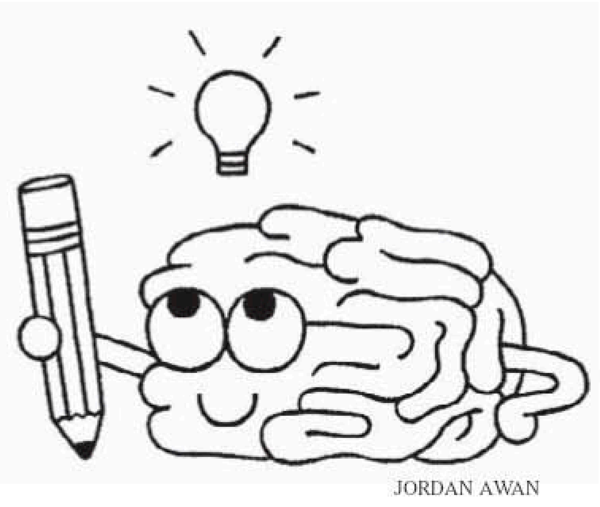
COOKING Need a spectacular finish for your holiday cookout? The Times Cooking team's collection of Memorial Day desserts can help. Try rhubarb crisp, berry blitz torte, salted pretzel brownies and more at *nytcooking.com.*

Quote of the Day

"It really feels like this unstoppable tide that we're futilely trying to suppress."

AMERICA BILLY, *a high school teacher in Brooklyn who is among several teachers and students at public, private and charter schools across New York City who say more and younger students are coming to school high on marijuana. Page A13.*

The News Quiz



JORDAN AWAN

Did you follow the headlines this week?
Take our quiz to find out.

1. Russia claimed victory in the deadliest battle in the war in Ukraine, a monthslong struggle for which city?

a. Bakhmut
b. Kyiv
c. Lviv
d. Nizhny Novgorod
e. Odessa

2. Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida announced his presidential candidacy on Wednesday, during an event where he was hosted by whom?

a. Anderson Cooper
b. Caitlyn Jenner
c. Elon Musk
d. Joe Rogan
e. Tucker Carlson

3. The Los Angeles Lakers, led by LeBron James, were swept in the N.B.A. Western Conference finals by which team?

a. New York Knicks
b. Seattle SuperSonics
c. Denver Nuggets
d. Miami Heat
e. Phoenix Suns

4. Dr. Vivek Murthy, the U.S. surgeon general, issued a public warning this week about the risks posed to children and teens by what?

a. Flavored vape pods
b. Handguns
c. Legal marijuana
d. Pollutants from factories
e. Social media

5. Stewart Rhodes was sentenced to 18 years in prison this week for his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol. Which far-right group did he lead?

a. Boogaloo Bois
b. Oath Keepers
c. Patriot Prayer
d. Proud Boys
e. Three Percenters

JOHN BURCHAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

6. Arizona, California and Nevada have agreed to take less water from what river, pictured above, which is at risk of running dry?

a. Carson River
b. Colorado River
c. Mississippi River
d. Missouri River
e. Sacramento River

7. A new film, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, features Harrison Ford in what he said would be his final turn as which iconic character?

a. Han Solo
b. Indiana Jones
c. Jack Ryan
d. James Bond
e. Rick Deckard

8. Researchers say a group of which animal has been colliding with boats off Southern Europe, sinking three of them?

a. Bottlenose dolphins
b. Gray seals
c. Great white sharks
d. Orcas
e. Walruses

9. Tina Turner died this week at 83. Which of the following was *not* a song that she recorded?

a. "Every Rose Has Its Thorn"
b. "Proud Mary"
c. "River Deep, Mountain High"
d. "The Best"
e. "What's Love Got to Do With It"

10. What state's senate voted this week to ban abortions after six weeks?

a. Arizona
b. New York
c. Nevada
d. North Carolina
e. South Carolina

11. Where did Typhoon Mawar hit this week?

a. Aruba
b. Australia
c. India
d. Guam
e. Myanmar

The News Quiz is published on Fridays in the Morning newsletter. To sign up, visit nytimes.com/themorning.

Solutions: 1. A; 2. C; 3. C; 4. E; 5. B; 6. B; 7. B; 8. D; 9. A; 10. E; 11. D.

Today's Top Trending Headlines

Texas Panel Files Articles of Impeachment Against State Attorney General A Republican-led committee of the Texas House of Representatives recommended that the state's attorney general, Ken Paxton, be impeached for a range of abuses of office that they said rose to the level of possible crimes. J. David Goodman wrote that the recommendation has thrust the State Capitol and its leadership into uncharted political territory, as the House prepares to hold a vote on impeachment, one of the few ever conducted in the state's history.

Leaders Let Problems Mount at Brutal SEAL Course, Navy Finds Inadequate leadership and medical oversight turned a tough Navy SEAL selection course into a dangerous ordeal, investigators have found. A highly critical Navy report released this week detailed how the Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL course injured large numbers of students. A previous Times investigation found that injured students were often refused medical care unless they first quit the course.

White House and G.O.P. Close In on Deal to Raise Debt Limit and Cut Spending The Times reported from Washington where top White House officials and Republican lawmakers were closing in on a deal to raise the debt limit for two years. Negotiators were discussing a compromise that would allow Republicans to point to spending reductions and Democrats to say they had prevented large cuts.

Are the Hamptons Still Hip? For Real Estate, Anna Kodé wrote about the Hamptons, a hot summer destination for young, up-and-coming New Yorkers, and its changing reputation. Ms. Kodé wrote that the Hamptons are not what they once were because of factors like extremely expensive housing costs and a crackdown on nightlife.

A Headline From History

POLICE AND NEIGHBORS JOIN IN A SOHO SEARCH FOR MISSING SCHOOLBOY

May 27, 1979. A door-to-door search began for Etan Patz, a 6-year-old boy who vanished after he left home for school in Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood on May 25, The Times reported. It had been his first time walking to school alone, and his disappearance shocked the nation. Etan was one of the first missing children to appear on a milk carton as part of a campaign by the National Child Safety Council. To honor Etan, President Ronald Reagan designated May 25 as National Missing Children's Day in 1983. Etan's case also prompted the creation of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children the following year. In 2017, nearly 40 years after Etan vanished, Pedro Hernandez confessed to luring Etan into the basement of a bodega and attacking him. He was found guilty of murder and kidnapping and sentenced to 25 years to life in prison.

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MARCUS OAKLEY

Facts of Interest

Adrienne Warren, who played Tina Turner on Broadway, needed physical therapy and personal training to survive the part.

Tornado. Treasure. Tina. Turner. C1

Only China has landed robotic spacecraft on the moon recently, with three successes in three attempts over the past decade.

Experts Say Japanese Moon Lander Crashed Because of a Mistake In Its Software A10

No N.B.A. team has ever come back from a 3-0 series deficit. This week, the Los Angeles Lakers faced such a deficit against the Denver Nuggets, becoming the 150th team to have tried and failed (miserably).

Celtics' Sparkplug Helps Team Forgo Foregone Conclusion B9

People from Buenos Aires are called Porteños.

36 Hours in Buenos Aires C10

Roger Waters, a founder of the band Pink Floyd, who has made anti-Israel statements in the past, has successfully fought two attempts by German courts to block him from German concert venues.

German Police Investigate Musician For Wearing Nazi-Like Costumes A11

Air travel has returned to prepandemic levels; more than 2.1 million people pass through airport checkpoints daily, as many as during the same period in 2019.

Strikes, Delays and Lost Bags: How to Survive Your Vacation B5

The new play "Work Hard Have Fun Make History," whose title echoes an Amazon motto, includes a couple of amusingly dim tech-bro characters called Jeff and Elon.

Ideas Collide Without Really Coming Together C2

Might We Suggest . . .

Four Weekend Recommendations From Around the Newsroom

1 Trying a New Look

Thousands of followers, V.I.P. clientele, cushy endorsement deals — barbers aren't what they used to be. A new crop of hairstylists made popular on social media are taking the career to new heights. So what will it be: a buzz cut or a fade? *nytimes.com/business*

2 Backseat Driving

Formula 1, the international motor sport, gained fans in the United States thanks, in part, to the popular Netflix series "Formula 1: Drive to Survive." This weekend is one of the racing season's glitziest events: the Monaco Grand Prix. If you can't lounge on a yacht in Monte Carlo (sorry), consider instead watching the race on television on Sunday morning. *nytimes.com/sports*

FRANCOIS NEL/GETTY IMAGES

3 Firing Up the Grill

Ring in the unofficial start of summer with a backyard celebration featuring easy make-ahead recipes. This holiday weekend, fire up the barbie to prepare shrimp a la plancha, or make the crowd-pleasing classic potato salad. Tajín grilled chicken will impress, and you can wash it all down with a savory margarita. And don't forget dessert: Whip up a pineapple upside down cake worthy of applause. *nytcooking.com*

4 Making Like an Artist

You don't have to be Picasso or Amanda Gorman to find pleasure in painting, writing or other artistic pursuits. The arts can elevate your mood, psychologists say, so go ahead and paint, or write poetry. It's never too late (just ask former President George W. Bush, a painter-come-lately). Start with lessons, or try an adult coloring book. Check out the book "Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us" to find your inner artist. *nytimes.com/arts*

Second Look

Suggested for You . . .

OLIVIA FIELDS

The United States surgeon general issued an advisory this week warning that too much social media exposure poses a "profound risk" to the mental health of young people. By calling on technology companies to change their strategies, and recommending that families limit their screen time, the top spokesperson for the nation's public health has identified likes and shares as a big issue. But will we spread the message, or just scroll past it?

The Mini Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6
7					
8					
■	9			■	■
10				11	12
13					
14					

5/27/2023 BY JOEL FAGLIANO

ACROSS

1 Sign out of one's account
7 ___ Gorman, poet who performed at Biden's inauguration
8 Charming guy?
9 H.S. proficiency exam
10 What a baby starts eating around six months
13 Out at night
14 Airport security grp.

DOWN

1 Pennsylvania has one against catching fish with your bare hands, believe it or not
2 "Wow, wow, wow!"
3 Graceful antelope
4 Watching what one eats, say
5 Prez for whom an N.Y.C. drive is named
6 Fidget spinners or flash mobbing, e.g.
10 Day after Fri.
11 ___ Moines, Iowa
12 Place to get a hot stone massage

SOLUTION TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

■	L	E	F	T
■	I	R	O	N
S	T	A	R	T
P	E	S	T	■
F	R	E	E	■

Here to Help

How I Hold It Together

As a writer and editor in New York City, I am constantly bogged down with deadlines. When I start worrying about my future, my therapist usually says, "You're getting ahead of yourself." Here are some ways I tame my anxiety. WENDY LU

I make a glass of cucumber water. It sounds fancy, but it's quite simple — and that's the beauty of it. When I want to do something nice for myself but don't have a lot of time, I fill a glass with ice water and plop in a few slices of fresh cucumber. It's refreshing and instantly lifts my mood.

I treat myself like a friend. As I've grown older, I have increasingly learned how to be my own best friend — whether that means taking myself on a date at a bookstore or staying in rather than going out.

I work on my children's novel. Every night, I spend 20 minutes working on my book, which is about a 12-year-old who loves Broadway. It's a different type of storytelling than I do for my job — and that's why I love it.

I ditch my to-do lists. I'm a big fan of bullet journals and organizers. But on days when I'm struggling to get through even one task, I ignore my to-do lists. I turn to a blank page in my journal, write down the following affirmation and repeat it to myself throughout the day: "I am doing the best I can, and that's enough."

YOGEE CHANDRASEKARAN

I cook comfort meals. In my Chinese American family, making and eating delicious food is a love language. On a tough day, I'll pop into the kitchen and make one of my favorite meals, like macaroni and cheese with kielbasa or a green bean casserole. Every good meal is a reminder to slow down and enjoy what's right in front of me. It's the purest form of self-love.

I invite someone to 'sit in the dark' with me. When my depression overwhelms me, it can feel like I'm alone in the dark while everyone is mingling in a well-lit room next door. I'll tell my partner what I'm going through, and instead of giving me advice or telling me to stay positive, he does what I need the most: He holds my hand and "sits in the dark" with me. He stays until I'm feeling better — until I'm ready to step out to face the world once again.

For more advice on wellness and self-care, visit nytimes.com/well.

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The New York Times

'A precarious life makes you understand all the dynamics of the conflict, and when you've lived it, you just want it to end.'

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FEDERICO RIOS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Mr. Palacios at a museum honoring victims of Colombia's civil war. Government forces, left-wing guerrillas and right-wing paramilitary groups fought from 1958 to 2016, killing about 450,000 people.

THE SATURDAY PROFILE LEYNER PALACIOS

Drawing Lots of Enemies While Protecting Colombia's Peace

By SILVANA PATERNOSTRO

CARTAGENA, Colombia — For a champion of peace, Leyner Palacios faces a lot death threats.

The latest menacing message came in February, when Mr. Palacios, 47, was warned he had 12 hours to leave the region where he was born on Colombia's Pacific Coast, and to "never come back."

The last time he had received a similar warning, in March 2020, one of his bodyguards was killed.

So Mr. Palacios, who served on Colombia's Truth Commission, announced on Twitter he was going into hiding for a while.

"I do not want them to see my coffin full of my unjustly murdered body," he wrote. "I have understood that the threat is the door to the cemetery."

The 11-member commission spent four years investigating every aspect of Colombia's conflict, which was fought between government forces, left-wing guerrillas and right-wing paramilitary groups from 1958 to 2016.

The commission's final report, issued last June, determined that 450,000 people had died in the fighting — twice earlier estimates — and issued a stinging critique of the way many Colombians had been treated as internal enemies by security forces. The report recommended sweeping changes in the country's police and military forces, including ending the relative impunity with which they had grown accustomed to acting.

While Mr. Palacios said he wanted the commission to reveal what had happened to all victims, his role was to focus on the war's impact on the country's Indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations.

Afro-Colombian himself, Mr. Palacios was one of 24 children of a small farmer. He grew up in Pogue, one of many tiny hamlets at the edge of the jungle within the borders of the Bojayá region.

"Catching fish with my hands, deer hunting with Dad, dancing to our drums," Mr. Palacios recalled of his boyhood during an interview he gave last year, shortly before the commission released its findings — with two government-provided bodyguards standing nearby.

His father made his sons pick cacao beans and chop wood. "That's how I was able to buy my first pair of shoes," Mr. Palacios said.

The way problems were solved in his impoverished but close-knit community along the Atrato River would inform his belief into adulthood that dialogue and negotiation were the best ways to settle disputes.

There was one day a year when all of Pogue, whose residents were mostly Black but also included the Indigenous Emberá people, took to the streets in costumes to play pranks and throw

Mr. Palacios, one of the members of Colombia's Truth Commission, at a meeting in the city of San Andreas. The body's final report was issued last June.

Mr. Palacios with Truth Commission workers and participants. He estimates that he heard about 900 testimonies, including one from a former president.

mud at each other, "especially at those with whom you had problems."

At the end of the day, everyone would eat, dance and talk.

"Everything was resolved with conversation," he said. "Never with guns."

That's not to say that armed men were absent from Bojayá.

Guerrillas belonging to the left-wing Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or the FARC, patrolled the surrounding rivers in canoes, and Mr. Palacios would sometimes hitch a ride with them for his three-hour trip to school. "They had guns," he said, "but I was never scared."

Right-wing paramilitary groups also were present, but until his late teenage years, there was a tacit truce, and Mr. Palacios said he mostly felt safe as long as he was careful where he went.

In 2016, the FARC fighters signed a peace deal with the government, a condition of which was the formation of the commission.

His most influential teacher growing up was a Catholic priest, the Rev. Jorge Luis Mazo.

"I listened to books on his tape recorder until the batteries died," Mr. Palacios said.

Father Mazo introduced him to the church's missionary work in the communities along the area's rivers, and he met nuns living in a convent in Bellavista, a bigger village along the Atrato.

In what turned out to be a perfect match for his skills, the nuns hired the newly married Mr. Palacios at 21 to pilot their canoe. He knew the rivers well — and how to talk to the communities the sisters wanted to visit.

Church figures in the area soon realized this shy young man had a special talent. "If I needed to go talk to the guerrillas, I brought Leyner. And if I needed to go talk to the paramilitary, I'd show up with him as well," said the Rev. Jesús Albeiro, a Catholic priest who has worked in the region for decades. "He could explain what the community needed better than me."

That ability to communicate with all sides is one reason Mr. Palacios was chosen to serve on the commission, which he joined in September 2020.

"A lot of it is the way I was raised," Mr. Palacios said of all the different cultures and viewpoints he had to straddle to navigate life in Bojayá. "A precarious life makes you understand all the dynamics of the conflict, and when you've lived it, you just want it to end."

That reputation for being able to interpret for all sides put his life in danger even as a young man.

When the FARC started recruiting minors from the region, local church leaders in 1997 asked the guerrillas to hear a public request not to involve civilians in the conflict. Mr. Palacios was chosen to address them in Bellavista. "I spoke and when I finished I closed my eyes, expecting a bullet," he said. "But then everyone applauded. Even them."

By that time, the local truce had faltered, and the FARC was losing control to the United Self-Defenses of Colombia, or A.U.C., a right-wing paramilitary group. And to the A.U.C., anyone not with them was an enemy, and they began targeting civilians.

In 1999, Father Mazo was killed when his riverboat was intentionally rammed, and a "devastated" Mr. Palacios named his newborn daughter Luisa, in his honor.

In 2002, FARC guerrillas attacked paramilitaries in Bellavista in a three-day battle. On the final day, a FARC gas-cylinder bomb was fired through the church's roof, killing 119 people, including 28 members of Mr. Palacios's extended family.

In 2014, when the government and the FARC were discussing peace in Havana, Cuba, Mr. Palacios was asked to tell the story of the massacre, and its aftermath.

"They think that when their lightning strike arrives and burns everything, that's all that happens," he said. "I told them that after they strike, they have transformed life for a very long time. The consequences are huge and long-lasting."

A public apology from the FARC was part of the peace deal, and Mr. Palacios's testimony helped convince the group to choose Bojayá as the right place to give it. Mr. Palacios said he made sure the ceremony, held on the steps of the burned-out church, was organized entirely by the community, not the guerrillas.

"This time we told them what to do, not the other way around," he said.

His role in the apology catapulted Mr. Palacios onto the national stage, turning him into the face and voice of those Colombians who had suffered the conflict's atrocities but believed in reconciliation.

In the years before he joined the commission, Mr. Palacios served as the local leader for a network of nonprofits working to improve life in Chocó, the state-level department along Colombia's northern Pacific Coast, which includes Bojayá.

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In that role, in 2016, he denounced collusion between security forces and the newly formed paramilitary group that had gained control of the area. Within hours, he received his first death threat.

After the commission's report came out, he returned to Bojayá and continued speaking out, lamenting that FARC guerrillas and A.U.C. paramilitaries had merely been replaced by other armed groups.

"Chocó is paralyzed with delinquency," he said. "Only the letters on the insignias have changed."

As he publicly deplored the situation, and the extortion and displacement still plaguing the region's residents, the death threats returned. "They must have said, here comes Leyner with the same speech again," said Mr. Palacios, still protected by government security.

Mr. Palacios estimates he heard about 900 testimonies on the commission, including from a former president, senators, landowners, small farmers, drug traffickers and ex-members of the FARC and the A.U.C.

One meeting was with a self-described hit man, who told Mr. Palacios he had been a target on his long list. "Of all the names," Mr. Palacios said he was told, "I was the only one alive."

The onetime assassin then asked for forgiveness. Mr. Palacios's response?

"We hugged," he said, adding he was grateful that the hit man "taught me some good survival tips."

A Conservative Stronghold In Canada May Be Divided By a Turn to the Far Right

By IAN AUSTEN

Sitting at a cafe terrace overlooking a park commemorating the birthplace of the vast oil industry in the western Canadian province of Alberta, Audrey Cerkvenac and Ernestine Dumont wrestled with a political dilemma.

In a province long the epicenter of Canada's conservative politics, the two older women had been unwavering conservative supporters.

But now, as Monday's provincial election approached, they said they had been turned off by the strident right turn the province's conservative party had taken as it ruled Alberta during the pandemic, fueled by extremist protests against Covid restrictions and baseless claims about vaccines.

The hard-right turn of the United Conservative Party has put a province that was once a sure win for Canada's conservatives up for grabs in Monday's elections. Beyond a referendum on the ideological shift of the party, the vote could also serve as a gauge of the conservative standing nationwide.

Led by someone who compared people vaccinated against Covid-19 to Nazi supporters, Alberta's conservative party has moved so far right since the pandemic that it has created an opening for the left-leaning New Democratic Party to win control of the province. A conservative loss in Alberta would deal a blow to the political viability of Canada's far right.

"The pandemic has allowed a radical, right-wing group to develop" here, said Ms. Cerkvenac, a retired health care administrator, who like Ms. Dumont, said she would probably deface her ballot to void it. "I have to do what I can to try and stop this."

Anger over pandemic rules, especially vaccine mandates for cross border travel, gave birth to trucker convoys in Alberta that spread east, eventually paralyzing Canada's capital for nearly a month and closing border crossings.

The fury also upended the political landscape, paving the way for a small, socially conservative faction of the United Conservative Party to install the current premier and party leader, Danielle Smith, 52, a far-right former newspaper columnist and radio talk show host.

After becoming premier last October, she declared that the unvaccinated were the "most discriminated against group" she'd seen in her lifetime and, in May, a video surfaced of her likening people who chose to be vaccinated to followers of Hitler.

In a province with a large and longstanding Ukrainian community, she suggested that some parts of Ukraine may "feel more affinity to Russia" and should separate. One of her first legislative acts was to sign a law she claimed would allow Alberta to ignore federal laws.

And Ms. Smith broke ethics laws to intervene on behalf of a prominent protester who was facing prosecution. Last week, the province's ethics commissioner found that she broke conflict of interest laws when she spoke with her attorney general on behalf of a pastor facing criminal charges for inciting a border blockade as part of the protests.

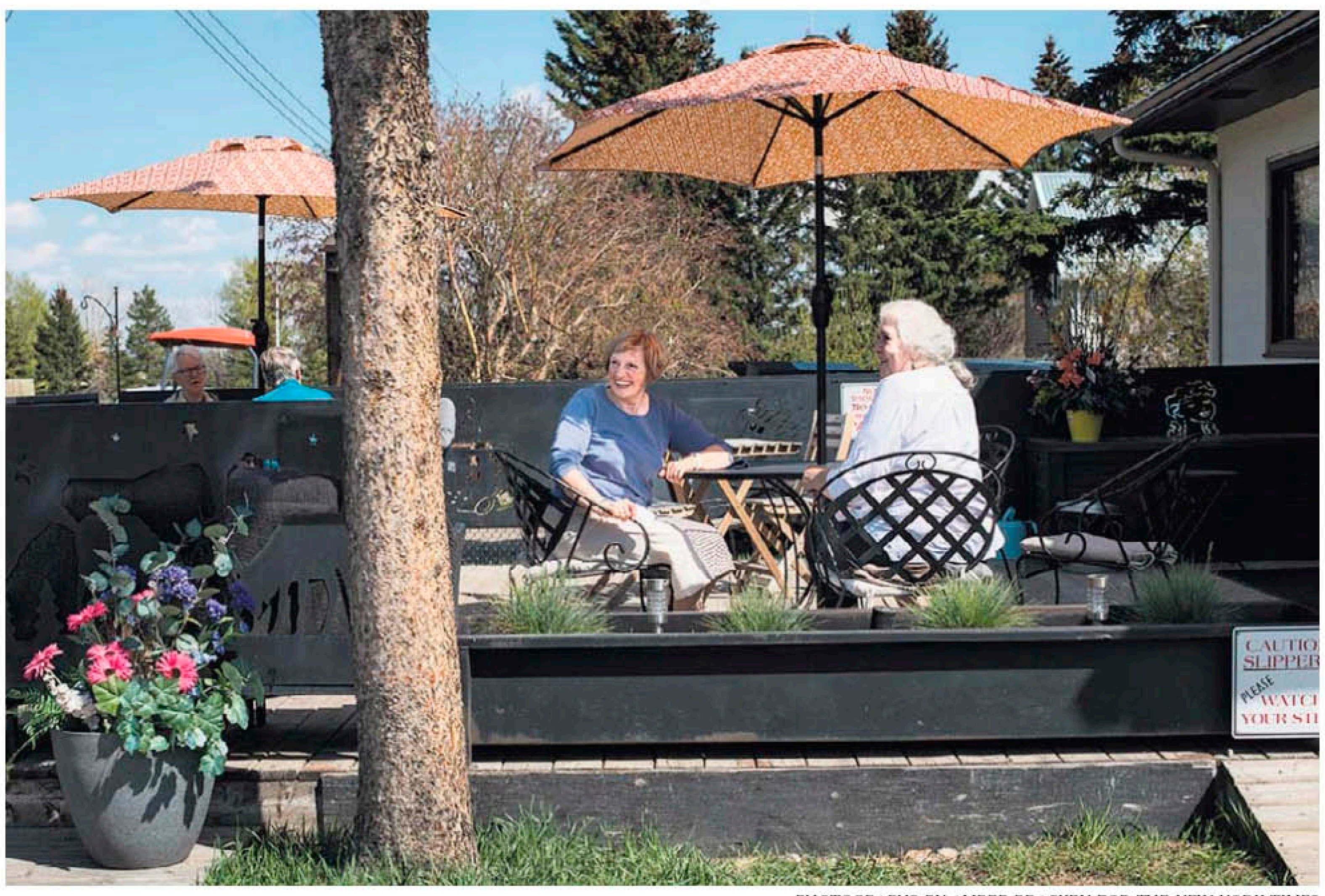
"When you look at public opinion data from pre-Covid, during Covid and whatever this period is now; there is something different in the water in Alberta from a cultural-political perspective," said Duane Bratt, a political scientist at Mount Royal University in Calgary, the province's largest city.

That difference may also surface during the next federal elections.

Canada's conservatives will challenge Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Liberal Party in elections that must be held by October 2025.

The federal Conservative Party also replaced its leader during the pandemic with a combative right-wing politician, Pierre Poilievre, who welcomed truck convoy protesters to Ottawa, the capital, with coffee and doughnuts and who shares Ms. Smith's tendency for provocative rhetoric.

On Monday, Alberta's voters have a stark choice between the United Conservatives and the New Democrats, or N.D.P., which held power in Alberta from 2015 to 2019.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMBER BRACKEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Clockwise from top: Ernestine Dumont, right, and Audrey Cerkvenac both said they tend to vote conservative but are rethinking their choices ahead of Monday's election; Rachel Notley, the New Democratic Party candidate in Alberta; Danielle Smith, the United Conservative Party candidate.

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Save four years, conservatives have run Alberta since 1935.

The N.D.P. gained power then from conservatives, who had run Alberta from 1935 to 2015, by taking advantage of divisions among conservatives to narrowly win a stunning victory. They installed Rachel Notley, a lawyer for labor groups, but her approval ratings sank as oil prices plunged, decimating the province's budget. The party lost power in 2019.

Ms. Notley, 59, is representing the N.D.P. again in this election. During campaign stops, she portrays Ms. Smith as unpredictable and promoting ideas most voters would reject, like selling public hospitals to a for-profit business or making patients pay fees for public hospitals — both considered politically toxic in Canada.

"This election is about leadership and it's about trust," Ms. Notley said at a campaign rally in Calgary. "Albertans don't have a high level of trust that they can count on her to protect our health care."

Ms. Notley said she plans to expand transit lines, and build new schools and hospitals.

For her part, Ms. Smith warns voters that Ms. Notley's party is bent on embarking on a spending spree that would inevitably lead to higher taxes.

Ms. Smith promises crime reduction and tax cuts. She also looks to the United States to define her conservative values, calling Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, who just announced his entry into the Republican presidential primary, "my hero."

During a debate between the two party's leaders, Ms. Smith sought to focus on Ms. Notley's performance as premier.

"Ms. Notley likes to show grainy videos of things I said while I was on radio and the reason she does that is she doesn't want to run on her record," Ms. Smith said. "And the reason she doesn't want to run on her record is it was an absolute disaster."

To become the premier again, Ms. Notley would need to see her party win the most seats on Monday. Her hopes hinge largely on how well her party will perform in Calgary, which historically has been a fickle base of support for the left, according to Janet Brown, the head of a Calgary-based polling firm. The New Democrats are already solidly ahead in Edmonton, the provincial capital, and one of their traditional bases of support, according to surveys.

"I'm not discounting any possible outcome," she said.

One deciding factor, she said, may be the large and rapidly growing ethnic communities in Calgary.

At a sprawling community center in a Calgary neighborhood home to many South Asian immigrants, Rishi Nagar, the host of a local Punjabi language morning radio show, said the United Conservatives had already alienated many South Asian voters before Ms. Smith became leader.

Her predecessor, Jason Kenney, appeared on his program and suggested that the high rates of Covid infections in South Asian communities was the result of their failure to abide by public health restrictions, even though Mr. Nagar and other community leaders pointed out that they worked jobs that exposed them to the virus.

"We are the people sitting at the cash counters of the grocery stores," he said. "We are the people driving taxis. We are the people driving buses. Don't you think this is the reason of the spread?"

He said many South Asians voters trust Ms. Notley to provide more funding for schools and health care even if her party is further to the left than many of them are. Voters may not embrace her party, "but people like Rachel Notley," he said. "People do not like Danielle Smith."

Ms. Smith still has support in rural regions of Alberta.

At a junior high school event on the rodeo grounds in High River, Alberta, Ms. Smith's hometown, Frank McInenly, a retired auctioneer, said he had little use for public health measures and was only vaccinated so he could vacation in the United States.

"The whole Covid thing with these people walking around these masks on, how dumb was that?" he said.

While Mr. McInenly will go on at some length about what he views as Ms. Notley's shortcomings, he's less than enthusiastic about Ms. Smith.

"She's OK," he said.

More than anything, Mr. McInenly's vote reflects his desire to keep the New Democrats out of power. "It's really scary," he said. "Because if the N.D.P. get back in, we're done."

War in Ukraine

Russia Hits Medical Center as Both Sides Increase Long-Range Strikes

By MARC SANTORA

KYIV, Ukraine — Explosions far behind the front lines shook Ukraine on Friday, as a Russian missile demolished part of a hospital complex and apparent Ukrainian strikes hit Russian-occupied cities, in their escalating, long-range aerial war.

The attack on a medical center in the central city of Dnipro killed at least two people, left three more missing and injured at least 30, Ukrainian officials said. It destroyed a three-story building and damaged several others.

President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine posted to social media a video of a gutted building, its roof and upper walls missing, belching smoke into the sky, calling it "another crime against humanity."

Ukraine is expected to launch a major counteroffensive soon — some analysts say it may already be in its earliest phases — and both sides have stepped up their strikes from a distance ahead of the clash on the ground. Kyiv's forces have increased the tempo and range of attacks deep into Russian-held territory, primarily on military depots, convoys and troop concentrations, and railroads used by Russian forces.

On Friday, explosions were reported over the Russian-occupied southern city of Berdyansk, about 60 miles from the front, for the second time this week. Vladimir Rogov, a Russian occupation official in southern Ukraine, said that several loud explosions had echoed across Berdyansk overnight and that Russian air defenses thwarted a Ukrainian attack, a claim that could not be confirmed.

The Ukrainian military did not comment on Berdyansk specifically but said its air force had "delivered five strikes targeting enemy manpower and equipment clusters." GeoConfirmed, one of several volunteer groups that closely track battlefield movements in Ukraine, posted images on Twitter showing a large fire and said impacts had been recorded in Berdyansk, though it was unclear what was hit.

On Friday night, there were two large explosions in another occupied southern city, Mariupol, about 40 miles from Berdyansk, near the Azovstal steel works, according to Mariupol city government officials who fled before the Russians took over. Russian occupation officials said the blasts were caused by Ukrainian missiles, newly supplied by Britain, according to the state news agency Tass.

The hospital strike on Dnipro on Friday morning followed one of Russia's increasingly frequent overnight barrages aimed at cities and infrastructure far from the battlefield, with missiles and drones fired in bunches in an attempt to overwhelm Ukrainian air defenses. Ukraine's military said it had destroyed 10 of the 17 missiles that were launched, and 23 of 31 attack drones.

"Only an evil state can fight against clinics," Mr. Zelensky wrote on Twitter. "There can be no military purpose in this. It is pure terror."

Russia's defense ministry told state media that it had struck Ukrainian ammunition depots.

The city of Dnipro is a hub for Ukrainian soldiers wounded in battle, usually a first stop before they are transported to hospitals in other parts of the country. It was not clear if any Ukrainian soldiers were being treated at the facility that was hit on Friday.

"It was a really difficult night," said Serhii Lysak, head of the Dnipro regional government. One of the people killed, he said, was a 69-year-old man who was "just passing by" when the hospital was hit.

From the start of President Vladimir V. Putin's full-scale invasion 15 months ago, Russia has used its advantage in weaponry to bombard civilian targets throughout Ukraine, like hospitals, schools and power plants, which is considered a war crime. At first the long-range strikes were entirely one-sided and largely unimpeded.

But as Ukraine's military has gained experience and obtained a growing array of Western weapons, it has become more adept at intercepting such Russian attacks, and more capable of responding in kind.

Last summer, the United States began supplying Ukraine with HIMARS rocket artillery systems with a range of about 50 miles, which made a crucial difference in battle. In December, Ukraine showed that it could adapt Soviet-era surveillance drones into long-range weapons to strike within Russia. And Britain this month began giving Ukraine high-precision, air-launched Storm Shadow cruise missiles with a range of about 150 miles — far enough to reach any corner of Russian-occupied Ukraine.

After a strike on Berdyansk on Sunday, local Russian officials claimed that Kyiv had used the newly acquired Storm Shadow.

Russian forces have turned Berdyansk, a port on the Sea of Azov, into a military stronghold, using it as a base for soldiers and a transit point for supplies, according to military analysts.

Closer to the front lines in the Donetsk region, Russian forces breached a dam on the Vovcha River on Thursday, causing flooding downstream that threatened six villages, home to almost 1,000 people, Pavlo Kyrylenko, the Ukrainian regional administrator, said on Friday. The strike may have been a bid to impede Ukrainian troop movements behind the lines, a tactic both sides have used in this war.

Ukraine's government has repeatedly warned of the risk that Russia will blow up the much larger Kakhovka dam on the Dnipro River, inundating a far wider area and lowering the reservoir that cools the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, creating an emergency there.

Late on Friday, Ukrainian military intelligence warned that the Russians planned to create an emergency at the power plant, which they occupy, "in the next few hours" to provide a pretext for a cease-fire that would forestall the counteroffensive. The Ukrainian government has issued warnings before about threats to the plant, but has rarely been so specific.

"A strike will be carried out" on the plant, followed by the announcement of a radioactive leak, the intelligence department said on Telegram, adding that the Russians would blame Ukraine. Energoatom, the Ukrainian nuclear power company, repeated the allegation.

The Ukrainians offered no evidence for the claim, leaving it unclear if it might be a case of disinformation intended to keep the Russians off balance. Hours later, a Russian occupation official claimed that it was the Ukrainians who were planning to create an emergency at the plant.

The United States is monitoring the situation closely but has seen no information to support the idea that an incident is planned, said an American official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters.

The United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency has inspectors based at the Zaporizhzhia plant, and a rotation of some arriving and others leaving was supposed to take place on Friday. The Ukrainians said the Russians disrupted it. The Russian state energy company now overseeing the plant told Tass that the Ukrainians had blocked it.

The U.N. agency declined to comment.

On the diplomatic front, Pope Francis, who has offered the Vatican as a mediator, refused to endorse the position of Ukraine and many of its Western backers, that Russia must return all the Ukrainian territory it has seized. Kyiv has called that a prerequisite for peace talks, insisting that otherwise, any cease-fire would simply solidify Russian gains.

In an interview on Thursday, in Spanish with the Telemundo network, Francis was asked twice whether Russia should relinquish the territory. The first time, he did not answer the question directly.

"It's a political issue," he said the second time. "Peace will be achieved once they can talk to each other."

Andrew E. Kramer and Maria Varenikova contributed reporting from Pokrovsk, Ukraine, and Julian E. Barnes from Washington.

MYKOLA SYNELNYKOV/REUTERS

Russian missiles destroyed part of a hospital complex in Dnipro, Ukraine, on Friday. "Only an evil state can fight against clinics," wrote President Volodymyr Zelensky.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Model for Future Security In Cold War's Diplomacy

By STEVEN ERLANGER

BRUSSELS — Though peace seems distant, the United States and Europe are debating how to guarantee Ukraine's security once the fighting with Russia stops, even without a total victory by either side. West Germany may provide a model, a precedent for admitting a divided country into NATO.

Despite its division and unhappy role as the border between nuclear armed rivals during the Cold War, West Germany became a NATO member in 1955, benefiting from the alliance's protection, without ever giving up its commitment to unification, finally realized in 1989.

For Ukraine, much will depend on the shape of the battlefield after its coming counteroffensive, and whether the outcome leads to some kind of extended cease-fire, relatively stable borderlines, or even peace talks.

As NATO's yearly summit approaches in July, its members are discussing what they can offer Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, who wants more concrete assurances that his country will join the alliance.

The West German model is gaining traction in some European capitals as a way to provide Ukraine real security, even if it does not immediately regain all its territory.

Germany is an example of NATO accepting a country with "significant and unresolved territorial issues" and a form of enemy occupation, said Angela E. Stent, an expert on Russia and Germany and author of "Putin's World."

"When West Germany joined NATO, there was what you could call a monumental frozen conflict," she said. "And yet it was felt very important to anchor West Germany in the Western alliance, and so West Germany joined. The Russians complained about it and said it was very dangerous, but they were powerless to prevent it."

After World War II, there were various options considered for what to do about occupied and divided Germany, much as there are now for Ukraine.

Soviet leaders spoke of a united but neutral Germany, on the model of Austria. However tempted, the Western powers resisted. And in fact Ukraine itself initially proposed neutrality just after the Russian invasion of February 2022.

Konrad Adenauer, the first chancellor of West Germany, chose security over territory, and Germans supported him, re-electing him until he resigned in 1963.

"Adenauer decided that it was more important to have a solid defense agreement with the West and led West Germany into NATO," said François Heisbourg, a French defense expert. "It was a brave decision, because it meant unity wasn't going to happen easily."

Ukraine is of course a different case. When West Germany joined NATO, it was not at war with East Germany and both entities had been recognized as individual states in 1949, said M.E. Sarotte, author of a diplomatic history, "Not One Inch," about the enlargement of NATO, German reunification and the Russian responses.

While West Germany's Constitution preserved the goal of unification, "the reality on the ground was what had formerly been the occupation zones coming out of World War II had hardened into state divisions," Ms. Sarotte said. "While no one was happy about this, you had this clear, hard border, and so that provided a clarity that doesn't exist in Ukraine."

Not yet, anyway. But as Charles Kupchan and Richard Haass suggest in a recent essay in Foreign Affairs, few expect the coming Ukrainian counteroffensive to drive the Russians completely out of sovereign Ukraine, including Crimea. If battle lines harden, they suggest, the United States should push for peace negotiations, even if neither Ukraine nor Russia seem eager.

That won't be easy. Ukraine worries that a cease-fire would endorse Russian control over a significant amount of Ukraine; Russia seems to think it can outlast Western support for Ukraine. Neither side is now open to negotiations, and Mr. Zelensky, in his own peace plan, insists that Russian troops first withdraw from all Ukrainian territory.

But as suggested by the battle for Bakhmut, the city Russia claimed to have seized after almost a year of fighting, even modest shifts in the front line come at tremendous cost in lives and matériel.

Few in the West want an endless war, already fearing the decline of popular support for limitless funding and the shortfalls in manufacturing the tanks, air defenses and ammunition Ukraine needs.

There have been various proposals for making Ukraine an indigestible hedgehog for Russia, so stuffed with sophisticated Western weaponry that, even if not a member of NATO, it could deter Moscow. That is the core of an idea first proposed by a former NATO secretary-general, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, and a top Zelensky aide, Andriy Yermak.

The Rasmussen idea, which many in NATO favor for now, suggests Israel as a model, where Washington's commitment to its ongoing security is clear even without a specific mutual-defense treaty. But the problems are clear: Israel has nuclear weapons, while Ukraine does not. And even bilateral defense commitments from NATO members for Ukraine could still end up dragging the whole alliance into a future Russia-Ukraine war.

So many officials and analysts believe, as Kaja Kallas, the prime minister of Estonia, said in a recent interview, that the only real security for Ukraine is NATO membership, "when conditions allow."

At the alliance's summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, in July, Ms. Kallas said, NATO must lay out a more concrete road map for Ukraine to join, reconfirming a promise first made in 2008.

"The only security guarantee for Ukraine is NATO membership," she said, citing the protection membership affords her own small country. "We don't have war here because we are members of NATO," she said.

Another benefit, she said, is that having Ukraine inside NATO would be "cheaper, much cheaper" than making it a militarized hedgehog for the next 50 years.

The counterargument, held widely in Washington and Western Europe, is that NATO cannot accept a country at war over disputed territory, and that such a move could push Russia to escalate further, even with nuclear weapons, before Ukraine could enter the alliance. But so far, Russian threats of escalation have proven hollow.

For now, ahead of the summit, NATO countries are preparing a medium-term plan of pragmatic military assistance for Ukraine, including guaranteed arms supplies and further integration into NATO's world. But Mr. Zelensky wants a political promise he can take home.

Still, if the war does not in the end produce large-scale Russian withdrawal and defeat, what could prove convincing to Mr. Zelensky and Ukrainians — giving any peace talks the most leverage — would be NATO membership, behind solidified cease-fire lines, perhaps patrolled, Mr. Heisbourg suggests, by a coalition of peacekeeping forces from NATO and other countries, like India or even China.

That would be coupled with the promise, as in Germany, that Ukraine's complete reunification would remain a live issue for the future. NATO membership would solidify the peace and allow reconstruction, private investment and the return of many refugees.

If there is only a cease-fire, Ms. Stent said. "there's no real resolution to this war, you don't know when it's going to start again."

"But the whole point of taking Ukraine into NATO would be to make sure that Russia didn't attack Ukraine again," she said, "because what we've seen in this war is that NATO is the only form of deterrence that's worked so far against Russia."

ANTON BRINK HANSEN/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Volodymyr Zelensky, the president of Ukraine, delivered a video message to a Council of Europe summit in May.

War in Ukraine

TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ukrainian soldiers on an armored vehicle in Bakhmut in November. By then, the city was already a maze of rubble.

THE DEVASTATING BATTLE FOR BAKHMUT, IN PHOTOGRAPHS

In a Year of Intense Fighting, a City in Eastern Ukraine Was Pounded to Dust

By MARC SANTORA

Even for those who witnessed the battle for Bakhmut, the longest and likely the deadliest clash of the war in Ukraine, words often failed.

Soldiers who fought in the shell-racked city strained to articulate the carnage. The reek of the trenches around the city and the unceasing howl of shellfire, they said, recalled the Battle of Verdun in 1916, which lasted 300 days and was one of the bloodiest of World War I.

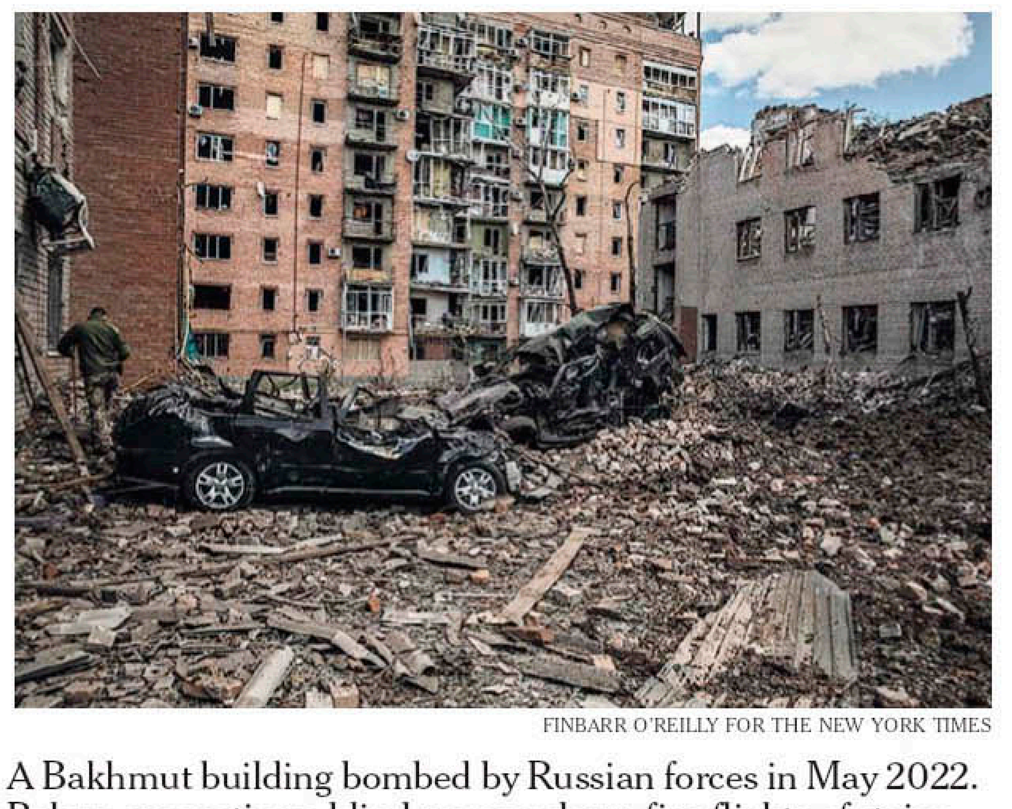
By the time the Russians declared victory on Saturday, relentless bombardment had turned former shops and homes to charred ruins. As Ukraine shifted focus to the fighting on the outskirts, President Volodymyr Zelensky acknowledged that the city was gone, saying “Bakhmut is only in our hearts.”

It was an arc of destruction captured by photographers from The New York Times over the past year.

A FIRST STRIKE

The fighting over Bakhmut started in earnest with a Russian missile strike in May 2022. The front was still some 10 miles away and artillery thundered in the distance. There were already few cars on the streets except for military vehicles; shops and banks were boarded up. Only one or two cafes and supermarkets were still open.

By June, the Ukrainian government was urging all those who remained in Bakhmut and other cities and towns in the path of the Russian advance to join a growing exodus of civilians fleeing for safety.



FINBARR O'REILLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Bakhmut building bombed by Russian forces in May 2022. Below, evacuating a blind woman down five flights of stairs.

IVOR PRICKETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Aiding a soldier wounded in an artillery strike last June. Below, dousing a fire from a Russian bombing in July.

MAURICIO LIMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

CLOSING IN

Across the Donbas region — a constellation of industrial cities and mining towns dotting the steppe in Ukraine's east — Russia repeatedly reduced towns and cities to rubble before claiming the ruins.

In July, after weeks of fierce fighting, Russia captured the twin cities of Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk, about 35 miles northeast of Bakhmut, and drove Ukraine nearly completely from the Luhansk region, which is part of the Donbas.

Capturing Bakhmut was seen as a step toward two more important cities, Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, and to the rest of Donetsk, the other Donbas region. The pace of artillery fire picked up, and Ukrainian soldiers were being wounded and killed by the hundreds every day, government officials said. Homes burned, and the city shook day and night.

DECLARING A TARGET

After Russia's plan to quickly topple the Ukrainian government failed and its military experienced a humiliating string of defeats outside the capital, Kyiv, and in other cities in the northeast, the Kremlin regrouped and redoubled its efforts to seize the Donbas.

In the summer, Russia still had vastly more firepower at its disposal than Ukraine, whose soldiers were dangerously close to running out of ammunition. At one point, Ukrainian officials estimated that Russian forces were firing 50,000 artillery rounds every day, noting that their own troops could hit back with only around 5,000 to 6,000 rounds.

On Aug. 1, the Russian minister of defense, Sergei K. Shoigu, declared that the battle for Bakhmut had begun. Not for the last time, speculation swirled: Could Bakhmut hold?

DAVID GUTTENFELDER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A man's neighbors tied him to a pipe in August — they said he fell asleep with a lit cigarette and set his apartment on fire.

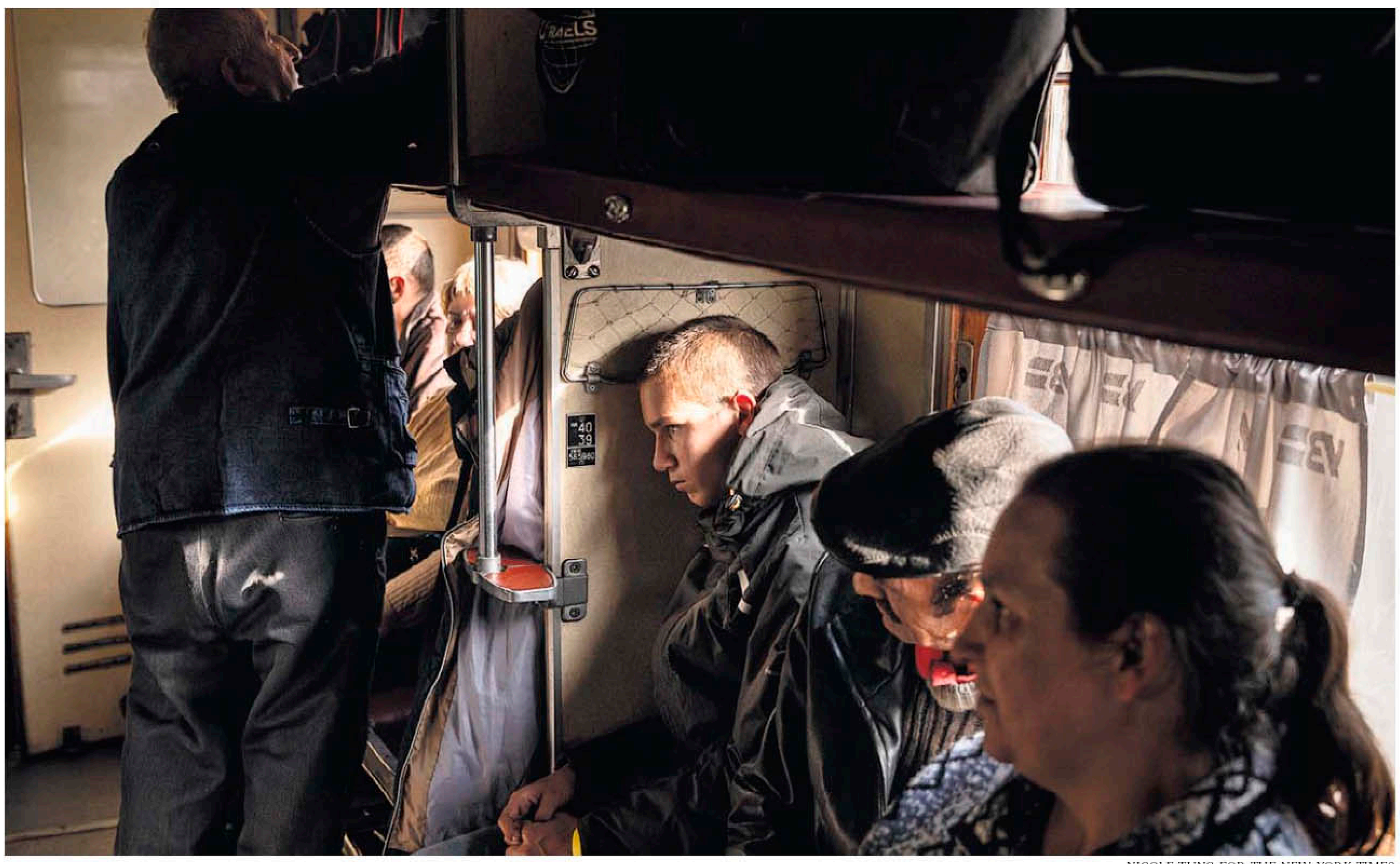
DAVID GUTTENFELDER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Ukrainian artillery unit on the front lines near Bakhmut in August. Kyiv's forces were running low on shells at the time.

Reporting was contributed by Carlotta Gall, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, Gaëlle Girbes, Andrew E. Kramer, Evelina Riabenko, Michael Schwirtz, Maria Varenikova, Slava Yatsenko, Dmitry Yatsenko and Natalia Yermak.

Continued on Following Page

War in Ukraine



NICOLE TUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

FIGHTING AT A DISTANCE

From Preceding Page

The city of Bakhmut was renamed Artyomovsk in 1924 by the Soviet leadership after the Bolshevik revolutionary Fyodor "Artem" Sergeyev, a friend of Stalin. In 2016, residents jettisoned the Soviet name.

In more peaceful times, Bakhmut was known for its sparkling-wine factory and salt mines. But as Russia stepped up its attempt to capture the city, Ukrainian officials said it was their fortress; over time, its symbolic importance grew even as military analysts questioned its military significance.

For much of the summer, the fighting took place at a distance as the two sides engaged in artillery duels and long-range strikes.

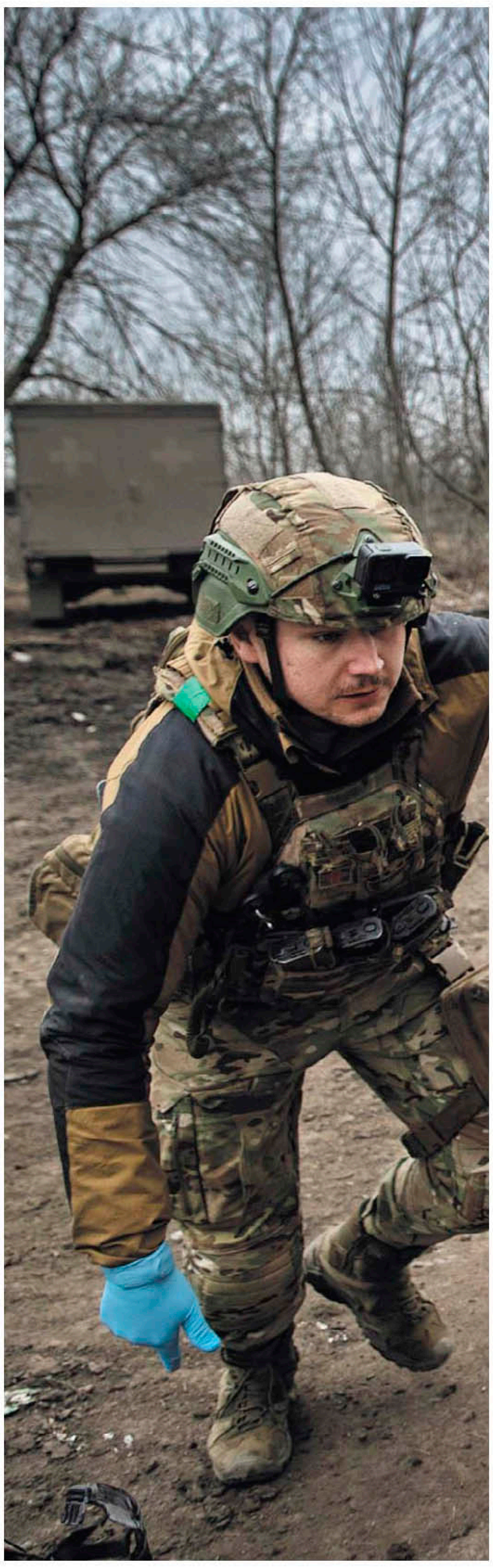
Bridges were blown up and the land was seeded with mines. Ukrainian soldiers fortified positions in the city, and Russian forces kept pounding away from the perimeters.

As the fighting raged, the authorities in Kyiv continued to try to persuade civilians to leave. Fearing there might be no heat, gas or power as winter approached, Ukraine ordered a mandatory evacuation in August.

That meant thousands more joined the estimated 14 million Ukrainians displaced from their homes across the country, often fleeing on crowded evacuation trains — a lifetime packed into a suitcase or two as they headed off not knowing if they would ever return.

Above left, at Bakhmut's military hospital in November. "They came in batches — 10, 10, five, 10," a Ukrainian medic said of the incoming wounded. Above right, one of the few shops still open in September.

Top, residents of Bahkmut and other cities in the region aboard an evacuation train in September.



Medics helping a Ukrainian soldier who was injured by shrapnel on the front line near Bakhmut in March.

NICOLE TUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A CITY IN RUINS

By November, the city was a maze of rubble, barricades and hastily constructed blast walls. Military analysts continued to question its strategic importance and whether it was worth the cost Ukraine was paying to keep the Russians out. When The New York Times visited the city in late November, a hospital was packed with dozens of soldiers suffering from all manner of trauma. Gunshot wounds, shrapnel injuries, concussions.

"They came in batches — 10, 10, five, 10," said Parus, one of the Ukrainian medics at the hospital.

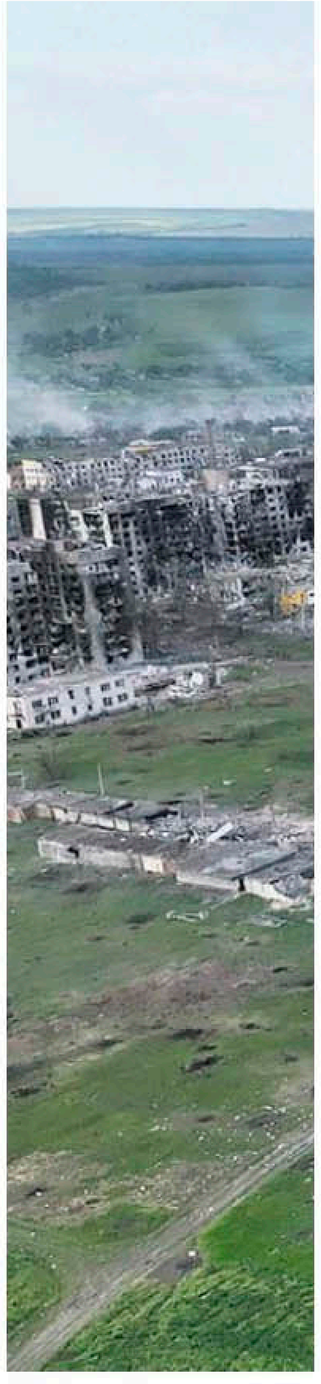
But a new phrase was also entering the lexicon of Ukrainians across the country as soldiers battled to keep the city from falling: Bakhmut holds.

TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ukrainian troops digging trenches in December, as national sentiment grew to hold on to the city. Top, a woman and two dogs lay dead in a doorway, the victims of Russian shelling.

NICOLE TUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A soldier hands out food in the eastern side of Bakhmut.



TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

INTENSE BOMBARDMENT

Russia had deployed hundreds of thousands of newly mobilized soldiers by February — replacing the estimated 200,000 dead and wounded in the war overall. Desperate for a victory, Russian fighters attacked Ukrainian positions, often with little support.

One Ukrainian soldier told The New York Times in February that they simply could not kill the Russian troops fast enough. They would mow down one wave only to be met by another group pushing ahead over fields littered with their own dead.

Despite staggering losses, the Russians kept attacking, slowly choking off the city as they closed in on vital supply lines. By March, the main roads in and out of the city were coming under heavy shelling and thousands of Ukrainian soldiers were at risk of being cut off.

As Ukrainian soldiers secured a crucial road and then started to take back land to the north and south of the city, Russian forces intensified their already withering bombardment of the city and of the last blocks where Ukrainian defenders held out.

MAURICIO LIMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Returning from the fighting in the south of the city in April.

DANIEL BEREHULAK/THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Ukrainian mortar. Russian troops endured withering bombardment as they closed in.

TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

A drone image of the city taken on May 19 while the photographer was embedded with the Ukraine's 93rd Mechanized Brigade.

EMILE DUCKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above right, a funeral in February in Irpin, near Kyiv, for a Ukrainian soldier who died while fighting near Bakhmut.

UNFATHOMABLE LOSS

Almost every night for the first two weeks of this month, sometimes twice a night, the Russian Army rained fire down on the Ukrainian positions in the form of incendiary munitions. As the fires burned, Russian artillery and tanks blasted away, and snipers hid in battered buildings to keep the Ukrainian forces from bringing in reinforcements or moving troops out.

The flames from Bakhmut lit up the night sky for miles, and smoke hung over the ruins in the early hours, so thick it looked like fog.

By last Saturday, one year after the Russians first started shelling the city regularly, they had succeeded in razing it to the ground.

Bakhmut was no longer a city but a graveyard.

Bakhmut was perhaps an unlikely city in which to take a stand — for both sides. But over time, it took on an outsize importance: a symbol of Ukrainian defiance and of Russian leaders' determination to blast their way to a small victory in a little-known corner of eastern Ukraine. It will long be remembered as a place of unfathomable suffering.

War in Ukraine

Far-Right Russian Militia Aiding Kyiv's Army Makes for Worrisome Ally

By VALERIE HOPKINS

A group of fighters aligned with Ukraine, who had participated earlier this week in the most intense fighting inside Russia's borders since the invasion, gathered the foreign and local press in an undisclosed location on Wednesday to celebrate, to taunt the Kremlin and to show off what they called "military trophies" from their incursion into their native land: Russia.

Their leader, Denis Kapustin, was proud that his force of anti-Putin Russians at one point controlled, he said, 42 square kilometers, or 16 square miles, of Russian territory.

"I want to prove that it's possible to fight against a tyrant," he said. "That Putin's power is not unlimited, that the security services can beat, control and torture the unarmed. But as soon as they meet a full armed resistance, they flee."

It was the rhetoric of a dissident freedom fighter, but there was a discordant note that emerged as clearly as the neo-Nazi Black Sun patch on the uniform of one of the soldiers: Mr. Kapustin and prominent members of the armed group he leads, the Russian Volunteer Corps, openly espouse far-right views. In fact, German officials and humanitarian groups, including the Anti-Defamation League, have identified Mr. Kapustin as a neo-Nazi.

Mr. Kapustin, who has long used the alias Denis Nikitin but typically goes by his military call sign, White Rex, is a Russian citizen who moved to Germany in the early 2000s. He associated with a group of violent soccer fans and later became, "one of the most influential activists" in a neo-Nazi splinter group in the mixed-martial-arts scene, officials in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia have said.

Mr. Kapustin has reportedly been banned from entering Europe's visa-free, 27-country Schengen zone, but he has said only that Germany canceled his residency permit.

The fact that the group has garnered attention for its operation and revived coverage of the group's ties to neo-Nazis is an awkward development for Ukraine's government, particularly since President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has justified his invasion on the false claim of fighting neo-Nazis and made it a regular theme of Kremlin propaganda.

Most of the anti-Russian groups harbor long-term political ambitions to return home and overthrow the Russian and Belarusian governments.

"The Russian Volunteer Corps marches in and destroys the current government — that's the only way," Mr. Kapustin said earlier this year. "You cannot persuade a tyrant to leave, and any other force would be seen as invaders."

In reality, far right groups in Ukraine are a small minority, and Ukraine has denied any involvement in the Russian Volunteer Corps or any role in fighting on the Russian side of the border. But Mr. Kapustin said that his group "definitely got a lot of encouragement" from the Ukrainian authorities.

Some on the far right in Russia long ago soured on Mr. Putin, particularly for his jailing of so many nationalists, but also for his policies on immigration and for what they perceive as granting too much power to minorities like ethnic Chechens. Since the 2014 Maidan revolution and the onset of war between Ukraine and Russian-backed separatists in the eastern Donbas region, many of them have made a home in Ukraine and are now fighting on the side of their adopted country.

The Russian Volunteer Corps, also known by its Russian initials R.D.K., was one of two groups of anti-Russian fighters that conducted a cross-border attack in the Belgorod region of southern Russia on Monday, engaging enemy troops over two days of skirmishing.

The aim of the incursions, the groups say, was to force Moscow to redeploy soldiers from occupied areas of Ukraine to defend its borders, stretching its defenses ahead of a planned Ukrainian counteroffensive, a goal which aligns with the broader objectives of Ukraine's military.

Allowing an extremist group to help could backfire on Ukraine.

The Russian Volunteer Corps also claimed credit for two incidents in the Russian border region of Bryansk in March and April.

The second group was the Free Russia Legion, which operates under the umbrella of Ukraine's International Legion, a force that includes American and British volunteers, as well as Belarusians, Georgians and others. It is overseen by Ukraine's Armed Forces and commanded by Ukrainian officers.

At the news conference on Wednesday, Mr. Kapustin affirmed that his group was not controlled by the Ukrainian Army, but said that the military had wished the fighters "good luck." There had been "nothing further than encouragement" from the Ukrainian part, he said.

"Everything we do, every decision we make, beyond the state border is our own decision what we do. Obviously we can ask our comrades and friends for their assistance in planning," he continued. "They would say 'yes, no' and this is the kind of encouragement, help I was talking about." That claim could not be independently verified.

Andriy Chernyak, a representative of Ukraine's military intelligence service, defended Kyiv's willingness to allow the group to fight on its behalf.

"Ukraine definitely supports all those who are ready to fight the Putin regime," he said, adding: "People came to Ukraine and said that they want to help us to fight Putin's regime, so of course we let them, same as many other people from foreign countries."

Ukraine has called the incursions an "internal Russian crisis" given that the members of the group are Russians themselves.

Some analysts dismissed the significance of the R.D.K. as a fighting force even as they warn of the dangers they pose. Michael Colborne, a researcher at Bellingcat who reports on the international far right, said he was hesitant even to call the Russian Volunteer Corps a military unit.

"They are largely a far-right group of neo-Nazi exiles who are undertaking these incursions into Russian-held territory who seem far more concerned about making social media content than anything else," Mr. Colborne said.

Some other members of the R.D.K. photographed during the border raid also have publicly embraced neo-Nazi views. One man, Aleksandr Skachkov, was arrested by the Ukrainian Security Services in 2020 for selling a Russian translation of the white supremacist manifesto of the shooter in Christchurch, New Zealand, who killed 51 mosque worshipers in 2019. Mr. Skachkov was released on bail after spending a month in jail.

Another member, Aleksei Levkin, who filmed a selfie video wearing the R.D.K. insignia, is a founder of a group called Wotanjugend that started in Russia but later moved to Ukraine. Mr. Levkin also organizes a "National Socialist Black Metal Festival," which began in Moscow in 2012 but was held in Kyiv from 2014 until 2019.

Pictures posted online by the fighters earlier this week showed them posing in front of captured Russian equipment, with some wearing Nazi-style patches and equipment. One patch depicted a hooded member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Mr. Colborne said the images of Mr. Kapustin and his fighters could damage Ukraine's defense by making allies wary they could be supporting far-right armed groups.

"I worry that something like this could backfire on Ukraine because these are not ambiguous people," he said. "These are not unknown people, and they are not helping Ukraine in any practical sense."

Mr. Kapustin, who in addition to speaking Russian speaks fluent English and German, told reporters he did not think being called "far right" was an "accusation."

"We have never concealed our views," he said. "We are a right, conservative, military, semipolitical organization," he said.

Thomas Gibbons-Neff, Andrew E. Kramer and Oleg Matsnev contributed reporting.

FINBARR O'REILLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Denis Kapustin, in black, leader of an anti-Putin group of Russians, has been identified as a neo-Nazi by the Anti-Defamation League.

Russian Public Appears to Be Souring On War Casualties, an Analysis Shows

By JULIAN E. BARNES

WASHINGTON — Public sentiment in Russia over war casualties has been turning more negative during the intense fighting in recent months in eastern Ukraine, according to a new analysis.

U.S. officials have highlighted the huge numbers of Russian troops killed and wounded in Bakhmut, Ukraine, in recent months, which they estimate to be more than 100,000. The city has become the scene of the most intense urban combat in Europe since World War II.

Those losses appear to be affecting public opinion. FilterLabs AI, which uses messages on the Telegram app, posts on social media and discussions on internet forums to track Russian public sentiment on a range of topics, has found that views on war casualties have become increasingly negative since late February.

At the beginning of the war, some U.S. officials predicted that public support for President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia would erode as the war went on and economic sanctions bit more deeply, potentially pressuring him to end the conflict. But that has not happened. Support for the war remains strong in Russia. It began to dip slightly in early March, only to rebound around the country's May 9 Victory Day celebrations, according to the FilterLabs analysis.

Still, U.S. officials say that while Russian public opinion has been difficult to accurately track, they too believe cracks in support have begun to show in recent months.

Polls in Russia, or any other authoritarian country, are an imprecise measure of opinion because respondents will often tell pollsters what they think the government wants to hear. Pollsters often ask questions indirectly to try to elicit more honest responses, but they remain difficult to accurately gauge.

FilterLabs tries to address this shortcoming by constantly gathering data from small local internet forums, social media companies and messaging apps to determine public sentiment. It also looks for platforms where Russians may feel freer to voice honest opinions, said Jonathan Teubner, the chief executive of FilterLabs.

FilterLabs has worked with Ukrainian groups to try to measure their ability to influence Russian opinion. The company's work is most useful in measuring the direction of sentiment, rather than a snapshot. As with any attempt to measure public opinion, sentiment analysis is imperfect, includes various sources of potential bias and represents just one organization's analysis.

FilterLabs uses native Russian speakers to help detect normal features of colloquial speech, improving the algorithm's ability to spot nuances of language, such as sarcasm and irony. The company also tries to identify known sources of propaganda on such forums and track them separately.

Concern over high casualties earlier in the war eroded support for Mr. Putin, prompting propaganda pushes by the Kremlin. But that loss of support was only for a short time, and the public rallied once more behind the government, according to FilterLabs.

The situation looks a little different now.

Kremlin-aligned news outlets appear to be trying to counteract the growing concern, publishing articles that are more sanguine about the number of Russian casualties, FilterLabs found. But the state-controlled news media seems to be having a limited effect on opinion so far this year, Mr. Teubner said.

U.S. officials warn that while Russians appear to be aware of the high number of casualties, so far that knowledge has not led to less support for the war or Mr. Putin. But, one official said, the recent casualties could be different.

As the war has gone on, battlefield setbacks have become less shocking to Russians. So a single event has a hard time changing overall support for the war, Mr. Teubner said.

But over time, if concern over casualties continues, support for the war is likely to fall. "Despite efforts to reverse Russian attitudes by Kremlin-aligned informational sources," Mr. Teubner said, "the reality of casualties is still one of the Kremlin's greatest vulnerabilities."

LYNSEY ADDARIO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

An abandoned Russian tank in the forest near the village of Ruski Tyshky, north of Kharkiv. A new analysis of social media and other posts signals that Russian support of the war has been eroding.

Experts Say Japanese Moon Lander Crashed Because of a Mistake in Its Software

By KENNETH CHANG

A software glitch caused a Japanese robotic spacecraft to misjudge its altitude as it attempted to land on the moon last month leading to its crash, an investigation has revealed.

Ispace of Japan said in a news conference on Friday that it had finished its analysis of what went wrong during the landing attempt on April 25. The Hakuto-R Mission 1 lander completed its planned landing sequence, slowing to a speed of about 2 miles per hour. But it was still about three miles above the surface. After exhausting its fuel, the spacecraft plunged to its destruction, hitting the Atlas crater at more than 200 miles per hour.

The lander was to be the first private spacecraft to successfully set down on the surface of the moon. It is part of a trend toward private companies, not just governmental space agencies, taking a leading role in space exploration.

A review of data showed that the software guiding the descent appeared to lose track of the landers's altitude when it passed over the rim of a crater on the moon's surface that was about two miles higher than the surrounding terrain.

The software erroneously concluded that the sensor had malfunctioned and rejected altitude measurements that were actually correct.

The engine, altimeter and other hardware operated properly, indicating that the overall design of the spacecraft is sound. Software fixes are easier to complete than major hardware overhauls.

"This is not a hardware failure," said Ryo Ujiie, the chief technology officer of Ispace, during a news conference on Friday. "We don't need to modify the hardware side."

The failure, however, pointed to shortcomings in Ispace's testing of the spacecraft's landing software, which was developed by Draper Laboratory of Cambridge, Mass.

A decision to change the landing site, after the design of the spacecraft was completed in early 2021, most likely contributed to the crash.

Originally, Ispace officials had chosen Lacus Somniorum, a flat plain, as the landing site. But then they decided that Atlas, an impact crater more than 50 miles wide, would be a more interesting destination.

That meant the landing software was not designed to handle the change in altitude as the spacecraft passed over the crater rim, and simulations did not catch that oversight.

On Tuesday, NASA released images taken by its Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter that appeared to show the crash site.

A mix of private companies, organizations and government space agencies have tried to return to the moon in recent years. But landing on the lunar surface has turned out to be more difficult than many expected.

The Beresheet lander, from an Israeli nonprofit named SpaceIL, launched to the moon in 2019, but it crashed. The Indian Space Research Organization attempted to land a lunar spacecraft the same year, too, and that vehicle, Vikram, also crashed.

Only China has landed robotic spacecraft on the moon recently, with three successes in three attempts over the past decade.

Takeshi Hakamada, the founder and chief executive of Ispace, said the schedule for the company's next two missions — involving an almost identical lander next year and a larger spacecraft in 2025 to the far side of the moon — remains largely unchanged.

"We have a very clear picture of how to improve our future missions," Mr. Hakamada said.

Ispace had obtained insurance for the lander, and the financial impacts on the company would be small, Mr. Hakamada said.

More spacecraft are scheduled to launch to the moon later this year. As part of a NASA program that is hiring private companies to take scientific instruments to the moon, Astrobotic Technology of Pittsburgh and Intuitive Machines of Houston, are scheduled to send spacecraft to the moon later this year.

The Indian space agency also announced this week that Chandrayaan-3, a follow-up to its moon landing attempt in 2019, could launch as early as July 12.

18 Students in Belgium Sentenced in 2018 Death Involving Hazing Ritual

By MATINA STEVIS-GRIDNEFF and KOBA RYCKEWAERT

BRUSSELS — Eighteen students who put a young Black man through a notorious fraternity hazing ritual at a prestigious university in Belgium, leading to his death and setting off a national debate about racism, were convicted of involuntary manslaughter on Friday and ordered to pay fines and perform community service.

Sanda Dia, a 20-year-old student at the Catholic University of Leuven, now known as KU Leuven, died of multiple organ failure in December 2018. He had been forced alongside two other fraternity pledges to drink alcohol excessively, chug fish oil until he vomited, swallow live goldfish and stand outside in an ice-filled trench.

The decision on Friday, by the Antwerp Court of Appeal, appeared to end a case that had wound its way through the Belgian justice system for five years. The court found all 18 students guilty of involuntary manslaughter and degrading treatment, but acquitted them of charges that included culpable neglect and administering a harmful substance causing death or illness.

The students — all members of the fraternity Reuzegom, which traditionally attracts scions of the country's elite — were each sentenced to perform 200 to 300 hours of community service and pay fines of 400 euros, or about $430.

The students, who have never been named fully in public, will also pay damages to Mr. Dia's father, brother and stepmother, who will receive totals of 15,000 euros, 8,000 euros and 6,000 euros, or about $16,000, $8,500 and $6,400. The students will also pay Mr. Dia's mother the amount she requested in damages: 1 euro.

The students' lawyers have maintained that Mr. Dia's death was a tragic case of hazing gone wrong, and the students' families have fought to keep the conviction off their criminal records.

One of their lawyers, John Maes, praised the decision on Friday as "balanced and well reasoned," according to Belga, a Belgian news agency.

In comments to the Belgian press, a lawyer for the Dia family, Sven Mary, expressed disappointment in the verdict.

"It is difficult for the family to hear that no one has been found guilty of culpable negligence or for administering the fish oil," Mr. Mary said.

But he suggested that he would not advise the family to appeal the decision: "I don't know if I would be doing them a service."

Because the students involved did not speak publicly about the case, he added, the family would not know exactly what led up to Mr. Dia's death.

"In the end, we didn't get an answer because of the silence the boys maintained," he said. "We will never know. This is difficult for the family to deal with."

After Mr. Dia's death, local news outlets uncovered details about the fraternity, whose members included the sons of judges, business leaders and politicians, that angered many Belgians.

On a separate occasion, for example, fraternity members used a racial slur as they ordered Mr. Dia to clean up after a party. A photo also surfaced purporting to show a fraternity member wearing Ku Klux Klan robes. A fraternity speech referenced "our good German friend, Hitler," and a video showed members singing a racist song about the Belgians' brutal colonial history in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Deleted WhatsApp messages, recovered by the police, showed fraternity members trying to cover their tracks after the death.

"This was not an accident," Mr. Dia's brother, Seydou De Vel, said in an interview in 2020.

"They thought, 'He's just some Black guy, we are powerful and nothing can happen to us,'" his father, Ousmane Dia, said in an interview at the time.

The case spurred many people in the Dutch-speaking community of Flanders to confront longstanding questions about endemic racism, especially as details emerged about the fraternity alongside a belated reckoning of Belgium's history in Congo and the spread of Black Lives Matter demonstrations worldwide.

Mr. Maes appeared to allude to those larger debates, saying on Friday that the court had risen "above the war language of recent years."

Others expressed outrage at the verdict. "Eighteen people humiliated and tortured Sanda Dia in 2018. No one intervened until it was too late," Kenny Van Minsel, who was a leader of the student body at KU Leuven when Mr. Dia died, wrote in Dutch on Twitter. "Sentences, fines & no mention of culpable negligence. This is beyond madness."

After Mr. Dia's death, the fraternity was disbanded, but some accused the university of being slow to take disciplinary action against the students.

After an initial investigation in 2019, the students involved were ordered to perform community service and write a paper on the history of hazing. The next year, KU Leuven reported that it had started a new investigation after gaining access to the case's criminal file.

In 2021, the school announced "final disciplinary sanctions" by expelling the seven students who were still enrolled, some temporarily and some permanently.

OLIVIER MATTHYS/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Ousmane Dia, right, with the family's lawyer, Sven Marie, in Antwerp, Belgium, on Friday after a court convicted 18 people in the 2018 hazing death of Mr. Dia's son, Sanda Dia, left.

Belgian Aid Worker and Iranian Diplomat Freed in a Prisoner Swap

By CORA ENGELBRECHT

Iran freed a Belgian aid worker imprisoned in Tehran for 455 days on charges of spying, in exchange for Belgium releasing a former Iranian diplomat who was convicted in 2021 of a thwarted bomb plot, officials from both countries said on Friday.

The aid worker, Olivier Vandecasteele, was flown late Thursday from Tehran to Muscat, the capital of Oman, where the exchange took place, Belgium's prime minister, Alexander De Croo, said on Friday.

"At this moment our compatriot Olivier Vandecasteele is on his way to Belgium," Mr. De Croo said in a video address from Brussels, confirming that the government had secured Mr. Vandecasteele's release. He added that Mr. Vandecasteele had undergone medical examinations to assess his health after more than a year "under very difficult conditions."

Mr. Vandecasteele had worked in Iran for five years until he lost his job in March 2021 and left the country. When he returned to retrieve some belongings in February of last year, he was arrested by Iranian authorities, who sentenced him to 40 years in prison and 74 lashes on charges of espionage, money laundering and currency smuggling. The Belgian government had called Mr. Vandecasteele's imprisonment arbitrary and said Iran had provided no information on the case.

In exchange for Mr. Vandecasteele being freed, Oman negotiated the release of Assadollah Assadi, an Iranian diplomat who was arrested in Germany in 2020 on accusations of plotting a bomb attack at a meeting of Iranian opposition leaders in France in 2018. The attack was thwarted, but he was later convicted in Brussels in 2021 and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Photos posted late Friday by Mizan, a news agency overseen by Iran's judiciary, appeared to show that Mr. Assadi had arrived in Tehran.

In a statement posted to Twitter earlier on Friday, Iran's foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, thanked the Omani government for brokering the exchange and sending Mr. Assadi, "the innocent diplomat of our country, who was illegally detained in Germany and Belgium for more than two years against international law" back to Iran.

Belgium's Parliament approved a much-criticized treaty with Iran in July of last year that allowed for prisoner exchanges between the two countries. Critics of the treaty said that the country was surrendering to a form of blackmail from Iran, which puts foreigners more at risk of being taken hostage.

On Friday, Belgian authorities said they had not used the treaty in negotiating Mr. Vandecasteele's release, according to the Belga news agency. Still, analysts say, Iran has made a practice of using Westerners as pawns.

"This has been a consistent policy by the Iranian government for decades, to use hostage-taking of foreign nationals and dual nationals for its foreign policy goals," said Hadi Ghaemi, the executive director of the Center for Human Rights in Iran, which is based in New York. "Unfortunately this continues to work for them," he added, noting that each prisoner swap "only encourages the Iranian Revolutionary Guards to take more hostages."

In a statement on Friday, Amnesty International applauded Mr. Vandecasteele's release but said it was "deeply disturbed" by an exchange deal that only perpetuated a "climate of impunity for the extraterritorial targeting of Iranian dissidents for extrajudicial executions, torture, and other ill-treatment."

Kylie Moore-Gilbert, a British-Australian scholar, was freed in a 2020 exchange for three Iranian men who were imprisoned in Thailand for organizing a foiled plot to assassinate Israeli diplomats in 2012.

Earlier this month, Iran released two French citizens, Benjamin Brière and Bernard Phelan, after they had been charged with spying. Nazanin Zaghari-Ratliffe, a British-Iranian, was freed in March after being detained for 6 years as a diplomatic pawn, according to her family.

Mr. Ghaemi noted that the latest exchange had taken place against the backdrop of a surge in executions in the country. At least 209 people have been put to death since January, according to the United Nations.

Koba Ryckewaert and Leily Nikounazar contributed reporting.

BELGIUM GOVERNMENT, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Olivier Vandecasteele was imprisoned in Tehran for 455 days on charges of spying. In exchange for his freedom, officials negotiated the release of Assadollah Assadi, an Iranian diplomat, to Iran.

German Police Investigate Musician for Wearing Nazi-Like Costumes

By CHRISTOPHER F. SCHUETZE

BERLIN — The German police are investigating Roger Waters, a founder of the band Pink Floyd, who has long been critical of Israel, after he performed in Berlin last week wearing a Nazi-style costume like the one he used to critique fascism in "The Wall."

Mr. Waters, who has made anti-Israel statements in the past that many have said cross a line into antisemitism, has successfully fought two attempts by German courts to block him from German concert venues in the past.

The investigation is focused on the costume Mr. Waters wore during a rendition of the 1979 Pink Floyd song "In the Flesh," from their seminal album "The Wall," in which a rock star imagines himself as a fascist dictator. Similar staging was featured in the 1982 movie "Pink Floyd: The Wall," featuring Bob Geldof.

During parts of the concerts in Berlin, on May 17 and May 18, Mr. Waters wore a black trench coat with epaulets and a red armband, according to videos posted to social media and witnesses. Flanked by men dressed in costumes that evoked Nazi storm troopers, he shot a prop machine gun into the audience. Mr. Waters has worn similar costumes at concerts outside of Germany for years for the routine, which he has called satire.

The Berlin authorities will have to determine to what extent the display of Nazi-like imagery is protected by artistic freedom of expression. In Germany, displaying Nazi symbolism, like swastikas or SS regalia, justifying or downplaying the Holocaust, and antisemitic acts are illegal.

"Artistic freedom of expression is not a license to incite hatred," wrote Nicholas Potter, a researcher with the Amadeu Antonio Foundation in Berlin, a group that tracks neo-Nazism, right-wing extremism and antisemitism in Germany, in an email.

Mr. Waters initially agreed to an interview with The New York Times about the investigation, but then declined. A representative wrote: "We are reluctant to comment if the intention is to further sensationalize this fabricated news story."

A Berlin police spokesman said investigators would present their findings to the Berlin state's attorney within the next three months. The state's attorney will decide whether to indict Mr. Waters.

Mr. Waters is a vocal proponent of B.D.S., the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, which pushes foreign governments, businesses and performers to cut ties with Israel until it ends its occupation of the territories it captured in 1967, among other demands.

Mr. Waters at past concerts has included a floating balloon representing a flying pig, which featured the Star of David. He defended that action, saying in 2013 on Facebook that, "Like it or not, the Star of David represents Israel and its policies and is legitimately subject to any and all forms of non-violent protest."

In a Facebook post on Sunday addressing the controversy around his German concerts, he criticized German lawmakers who condemned B.D.S., saying they had "enshrined a recommendation to the German people to 'stand by silent and indifferent'" to the "institutionalized murder" of the Palestinian people by a "tyrannical racist regime," which he said was the State of Israel.

On giant display boards at the concert, the name of Anne Frank, one of the most readily recognizable victims of the Holocaust, during which Germans killed more than 6 million Jews, was juxtaposed next to the name Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian American television correspondent who was shot by Israeli Defense Forces soldiers during a raid into the West Bank last year.

On Wednesday morning Israel's Foreign Ministry posted on Twitter: "Good morning to every one but Roger Waters who spent the evening in Berlin (Yes Berlin) desecrating the memory of Anne Frank and the 6 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust."

On Wednesday, the Simon Wiesenthal Center publicly called on the German authorities to investigate the concert in Berlin. "There are few performers whose anti-Israel vitriol can match that of Waters," the center wrote in a statement. "Despite his protests to the contrary, Waters has, for years, crossed the line between anti-Zionism and antisemitism."

Any charges stemming from the concert would come as Germany faces a more general debate about the rise of antisemitism in the country, 78 years after the end of the Holocaust. In addition to an overall increase in the number of antisemitic crimes reported in the country, there were wide-ranging discussions after a group of leaders of cultural institutions published an open letter decrying not just B.D.S. but also a parliamentary resolution that declared B.D.S. inherently antisemitic. And an art installation featuring antisemitic caricatures at the Documenta art festival in Kassel last year led to another round of soul searching among cultural elites.

The city of Frankfurt tried to stop Mr. Waters from performing at the Frankfurter Festhalle this coming Sunday, a concert venue partly owned by the city. In November 1938, thousands of Jewish men were taken to the arena after the night of pogroms known as Kristallnacht, before being shipped off to concentration camps. But a judge in Frankfurt backed Mr. Waters, who had filed an emergency injunction against the city on Monday, citing the constitutional right to artistic freedom and the fact that there was no evidence that Mr. Waters would break the law.

In March, the city of Munich determined that it could legally not back out of a contract with the musician for a show. Instead the city decided to allow organized protests outside the venue on the day of the concert.

Alex Marshall contributed reporting from London.

F.B.I. Papers Detail Threat To Monarch On U.S. Trip

By DERRICK BRYSON TAYLOR

A trove of documents released this week by the F.B.I. reveal details about an assassination threat against Queen Elizabeth II before a trip that she and her husband made to the United States in 1983, as well as other security concerns linked to the Irish Republican Army.

The documents were published on the F.B.I.'s website after a request under the Freedom of Information Act. The queen, who was Britain's longest-reigning monarch, died in September.

The plot to kill the queen was shared with a San Francisco Police Department officer in early February 1983, weeks before she and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, were scheduled to visit the United States, the documents show. Specific names and other details are redacted from the report.

The unidentified officer said he had received a phone call on Feb. 4, 1983, from a man who claimed that his daughter had been killed in Northern Ireland by a rubber bullet. The officer frequented an Irish pub called the Dovre Club, which the F.B.I. described as a gathering place for sympathizers of the Irish Republican Army.

The 1983 visit, like some of the queen's other trips to the United States, occurred during the 30-year sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland known as the Troubles. Some 3,600 people were killed during that period, when Britain deployed its military to the Protestant enclave to confront groups, including the I.R.A., that wanted to reunite Northern Ireland with the rest of Ireland.

ED REINKE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

In 1983, a man planned to kill Queen Elizabeth II in the U.S.

The man on the phone call shared plans to harm the queen by either "dropping some object off the Golden Gate Bridge onto the royal yacht Britannia" when it sailed underneath or attempting to kill her during a visit to Yosemite National Park, the documents said. Specific details about how either plot would have been accomplished were not provided.

Officials noted that the Secret Service had intended to close the walkways on the Golden Gate Bridge when the yacht was nearby. Though it is unclear if any arrests were made, the documents note that the monarch's visit was completed "without incident."

The F.B.I. did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday morning.

The New York Times covered the queen's tour of the West Coast at the time, describing it as a sparkling affair punctuated by a visit to President Ronald Reagan's ranch in California. It was reported that inclement weather had forced the royal couple to fly rather than sail into the Bay Area, although they participated in a dockside send-off celebration.

The queen said her time on the West Coast was "a wonderful and enjoyable journey."

Security concerns about some of the queen's other visits to the United States were also outlined in the documents. Before her trip to Kentucky in 1989, the F.B.I. said it was unaware of any specific threats against the monarch, but noted "the possibility of threats against the British monarchy is everpresent from the Irish Republican Army."

During another trip, in 1991, the queen attended a Baltimore Orioles game with President George Bush. F.B.I. officials took note of a letter published in a Philadelphia Irish newspaper before the trip.

Officials said Irish groups were planning to protest the queen at the baseball game and that an Irish group had reserved a large bloc of tickets.

According to The Times, that night the queen and others sat in the glass-fronted box reserved for the team's owner. After greeting the players and before taking her seat, the queen waved at the crowd, which burst into cheers and applause.

On Campaign Trail, Erdogan Entices His Base and Bashes His Rivals

By BEN HUBBARD
and GULSIN HARMAN

ISTANBUL — His campaign addresses begin softly, drawing the audience in. A devout Muslim, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan frequently says he seeks to please not just the Turkish people, but also God. Playing to the crowds, he sings folk songs, recites lines from local poets or drapes the sash of the local soccer team over his shoulders.

He sometimes wades into the throngs of supporters for photos or greets children, who kiss his hands. Then he takes the podium to speak, dressed in a suit or a plaid sports coat.

To the cheers and whistles of hundreds of transportation workers at a campaign rally last week, he laid out why they should keep him in power in a runoff on Sunday. He boasted that he had improved the country's roads and bridges, raised wages and offered tax breaks to small businesses.

He also vowed to keep fighting forces that he deemed enemies of the nation, including gay rights activists, to make Turkey "stronger in the world." And he bashed the leaders of the opposition who are seeking to unseat him, accusing them of having entered "dark rooms to sit and bargain" with terrorists because they won the support of Turkey's main pro-Kurdish party.

"We take refuge only in our God and we take our orders from our nation," the president said. The crowd roared and men leaped to their feet, chanting, "Turkey is proud of you!"

Mr. Erdogan, 69, came out ahead in the toughest political fight of his career on May 14 — the first round of the presidential election. Since then, he has kept a busy schedule in the run-up to final vote.

In multiple appearances a day and in speeches that sometimes last 40 minutes, he has stuck to themes that have served him well during his two decades as Turkey's leading politician. He bills himself on the campaign trail as the leader needed to shepherd a rising country struggling to beat back multiple threats so it can claim its rightful place as a global power.

In the first round of voting, Mr. Erdogan failed to win the majority he needed for an outright victory. But with 49.5 percent of the vote, he did beat his main challenger, the opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who got 44.9 percent.

Many analysts predict Mr. Erdogan will win on Sunday given his strong showing in the first round and his subsequent endorsement by the third-place candidate, Sinan Ogan, who received 5.2 percent of the vote and was eliminated from the race.

In grand terms, the president casts Turkey as being in a great struggle to rise in spite of forces conspiring to keep it down, and he invites voters to join him in this heroic national cause.

ADEM ALTAN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

SEDAT SUNA/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Above, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey campaigning in Ankara last month. Right, a campaign poster in Istanbul of the opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu. The runoff election is Sunday.

He vows to fight "imperialists," a code word for the West that recalls the fight for independence from European powers that led to Turkey's founding 100 years ago. He warns of "traps" and "plots" against the nation, like the attempted coup against him in 2016. He speaks out against "economic hit men" and "loan sharks in London," hinting at foreign hands behind Turkey's economic struggles. And he blasts terrorist organizations, pointing to decades of bloody battles between the government and militants from Turkey's Kurdish minority.

To tout his government's accomplishments, he lauds the infrastructure, calling out airports, tunnels and bridges by name and reminding voters how new highways have cut drive times between cities. Other oft-cited points of pride are the drones, warships and satellites produced by Turkey's growing defense industry.

Mr. Erdogan spends little time on the country's economic woes, including annual inflation that peaked above 80 percent last year and remained stubbornly high at 44 percent last month, greatly reducing the purchasing power of ordinary citizens. Nor has he hinted that in victory he would revise policies that some economists say have left the economy vulnerable to a possible currency crisis or recession.

The president particularly relishes belittling his challenger, Mr. Kilicdaroglu, who pitched himself to voters as less imperious and more in touch with the concerns of common people. Mr. Kilicdaroglu promised to strengthen Turkish democracy following years of a slide toward autocracy, and to repair relations with the West.

In nearly every speech, Mr. Erdogan dismisses his rival as incompetent and as a servant of Western powers. But his most potent line of attack has been to link the opposition, in voters' minds, with terrorism.

Turkey has fought for decades with Kurdish militants seeking autonomy from the state. Turkey, the United States and the European Union consider them terrorists. The Turkish government has also often accused the country's main pro-Kurdish party of collaborating with the militants, and many party members and leaders have been jailed or removed from elected posts in parliament or city councils.

In the run-up to the election, the pro-Kurdish party endorsed Mr. Kilicdaroglu, and Mr. Erdogan pounced, leveling terrorism accusations and even showing videos at campaign rallies that falsely showed militant leaders singing along to an opposition campaign song.

"Can any benefit come to my nation from those who are going around hand in hand with terrorists?" Mr. Erdogan said at one rally in Hatay Province, one of the areas hardest hit by the February earthquakes that killed more than 50,000 people in southern Turkey.

For his staunchest supporters, who tend to be working class, rural, religious or from smaller cities away from the coasts, Mr. Erdogan has rock star appeal.

'He is very good at delivering a message,' one analyst noted.

His campaign anthems blare as his supporters crowd into stadiums to await his appearance. The orange and blue flags of his governing Justice and Development Party are often strung up overhead.

During appearances in the quake-hit region, campaign organizers flooded audiences with Turkish flags, turning otherwise drab expanses of temporary shelters into seas of red and white.

Mr. Erdogan acknowledged some criticisms that his government was initially slow to respond. Calling the quakes the "disaster of the century," he spoke of a newly built hospital and his government's plans to build hundreds of thousands of homes in the area in the next year.

"With your support and your prayers, we will bring you to your new homes," he told supporters in Hatay.

In recent appearances, Mr. Erdogan has put his connection with voters in almost romantic terms.

"Don't forget, we are together not until Sunday, but until the grave," he told supporters in the central province of Sivas, where he won more than two-thirds of the vote in the first round.

Even opposition supporters acknowledge Mr. Erdogan's strong bond with his constituents.

"He has been in power for a very long time and he is very good at delivering a message," said Gulfem Saydan Sanver, a Turkish political consultant who has advised members of the opposition. "Over the years, he has built trust with his voters, and they believe whatever he says."

MURAD SEZER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Recep Tayyip Erdogan has overcome a career of setbacks, including a criminal conviction in 1998 when he was mayor of Istanbul.

GETTY IMAGES

After a plan to build a mall led to protests, he cracked down — not just on the protesters, but anyone accused of sympathizing.

GETTY IMAGES

A failed coup in 2016 gave Mr. Erdogan a chance to tighten his grip. Thousands were arrested, and media outlets were closed.

Strongman Steadily Built Up Power Through Jail Term, Protests and a Coup

By ALAN YUHAS

From mayor to lawmaker and prime minister to president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan rose through the ranks to Turkey's highest positions and then made them his own, bringing the country over the course of 20 years closer to one-man rule.

On Sunday, Mr. Erdogan will try to secure another term as president, although only after the opposition forced him into a runoff vote. That the election has gone to a second round is a sign that his grip on the country has slipped, if not been broken, amid a host of problems like economic turmoil, widespread corruption and his government's handling of catastrophic earthquakes this spring.

But Mr. Erdogan has navigated crises since the earliest days of his career, including a jail sentence, mass protests and an attempted coup. Several of those episodes illustrate how he not just survived crises, but found opportunities to consolidate power through them.

A lifetime ban that lasted a few years

In 1998, Mr. Erdogan, then Istanbul's 44-year-old mayor, was a rising star of Turkey's Islamist political movement — which was the target of a crackdown by the military-backed authorities. That year, a court convicted him of having called for religious insurrection by quoting an Islamist poem from the 1920s. He was sentenced to 10 months in jail and handed a lifetime ban on political activity.

Although predominantly Muslim, Turkey was founded as a secular republic and the traditional political elites felt the Islamists were anathema to those values.

Mr. Erdogan spent four months in jail, making plans for a comeback despite the ban. In a general amnesty in 2001, Turkey's Constitutional Court lifted the ban, and he soon assembled a new political party with other reformists from the Islamist movement who promised good governance and sought ties with the West.

Allies who changed the rules

Mr. Erdogan's ascent was nearly stopped in 2002 by Turkey's electoral board, which barred him from an election because of his criminal conviction. But his party colleagues, who had swept into Parliament, amended the Constitution to let him run. Mr. Erdogan won office and became prime minister in 2003.

He governed piously at home and pragmatically abroad, winning allies with a mix of charisma and nationalistic fervor. He pushed to lift bans on women's head scarves in state offices, promoted the construction of mosques, courted the E.U. market and fended off challenges from rivals among Turkey's military and business elites.

His government also began prosecuting some of those figures, in 2008 accusing dozens of people, including retired army generals and journalists, of trying to stage a coup. Mr. Erdogan's allies called the trial an attempt to reckon with Turkey's history of violent power struggle. Critics called it an effort to silence the secular opposition.

With voters' approval in a referendum two years later, Mr. Erdogan reshaped the Constitution again. He said the 2010 overhaul brought Turkey closer to Europe's democracies and broke from its military past, while his opponents said it gave his conservative government greater control over the military and the courts. He won a third term as prime minister in 2011.

The mall that provoked protests

Mr. Erdogan was not without significant, if disparate, opposition. In 2013, protests that erupted over a proposed mall to replace an Istanbul park morphed into a demonstration of discontent over many issues, including the drift toward Islamist policies and persistent corruption.

Mr. Erdogan cracked down, not just on protesters but also on medics, journalists, activists, business owners and officials accused of sympathizing. Some cultural figures were imprisoned and others fled, and for many who remained, an atmosphere of self-censorship descended.

As his term neared its end, Mr. Erdogan faced a problem: His party's rules prevented him from another turn as prime minister. In 2014, he instead ran for another office — becoming Turkey's first popularly elected president, opening his term with words of rapprochement.

"I want us to build a new future with an understanding of societal reconciliation, while considering our differences as our richnesses and bringing forward our common values," he said in a victory speech.

But rather than limit himself to the mostly ceremonial duties of the role, he moved to maximize its powers, which included a veto on legislation and the ability to appoint judges.

The transformative aftermath of a coup

Mr. Erdogan's rule nearly ended in 2016, as a chaotic insurrection by parts of the military and members of an Islamist group that had once been his political ally tried to oust him. But he skirted capture, called Turks to protest in the streets and soon re-emerged in Istanbul to reassert control.

"What is being perpetrated is a rebellion," he said. "They will pay a heavy price for their treason to Turkey."

A purge that followed reshaped Turkey: Thousands accused of connections to the coup plot were arrested, tens of thousands lost jobs in schools, police departments and other institutions, and more than 100 media outlets were shuttered. Most of those caught up in the purge were accused of affiliations with the Gulen movement, the Islamist followers of Fethullah Gulen, the cleric accused by Mr. Erdogan of orchestrating the coup while living in exile in the United States.

Within a year, Mr. Erdogan had arranged another referendum for voters, this one on whether to abolish the post of prime minister and move power to the president, as well as grant the role more abilities.

With his opponents under pressure and his allies reinvigorated, he narrowly won the referendum, calling the changes necessary to make the government more efficient. The next year, he won reelection to another five-year term.

A blitz of decrees and growing discontent

Hours before his inauguration in 2018, Mr. Erdogan published a 143-page decree that changed the way almost every government department operated. He fired another 18,000 state employees and made several major appointments, naming his son-in-law the new finance minister.

The decree was just one sign of how far Mr. Erdogan has taken Turkey down the path toward strongman rule. The government announced new internet restrictions and started monumental projects — including soaring bridges, an enormous mosque and a plan for an "Istanbul Canal."

Many of Mr. Erdogan's supporters hail efforts like these as visionary, but critics say they feed a construction industry that is plagued by corruption and which has wasted state funds.

Those frustrations have spread among many Turks in recent years. While Mr. Erdogan has raised Turkey's stature abroad and pursued major projects, his consolidation of power has left some uneasy, and the economy has suffered.

That dissent has loosened Mr. Erdogan's hold over the country.

In 2019, his party lost control of some of Turkey's largest cities — only to contest the results in Istanbul. Turkey's High Election Council ordered a do-over election, a decision condemned by the opposition as a capitulation to Mr. Erdogan, but his party lost that second vote, too, ending 25 years of dominance in Turkey's largest city.

And now, with his government criticized for its preparation for earthquakes and its response to them, and Turkey's economy teetering on the verge of crisis, Mr. Erdogan has persisted with major spending and lowering interest rates despite inflation, which has left many Turks feeling far poorer.

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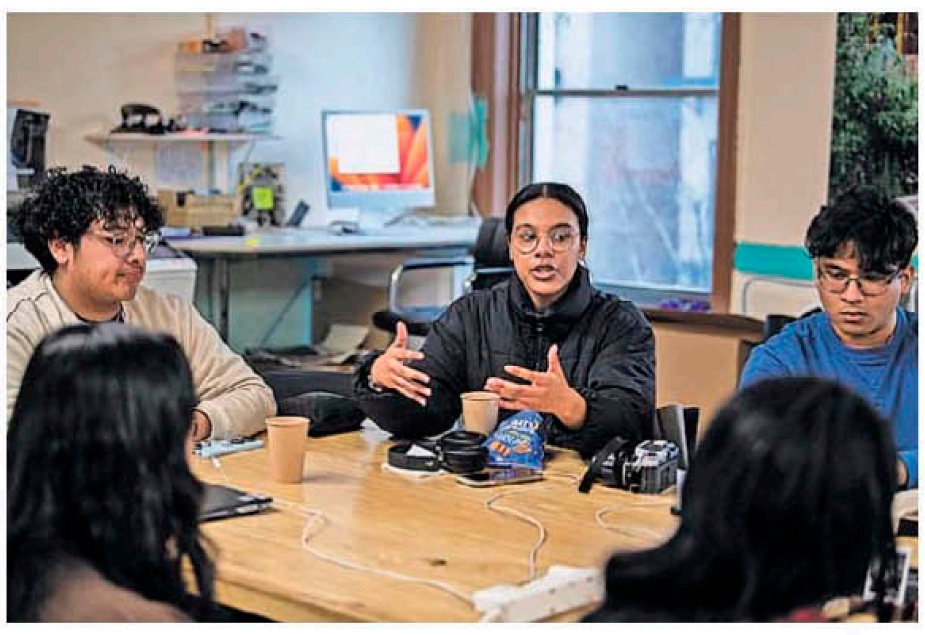
The New York Times

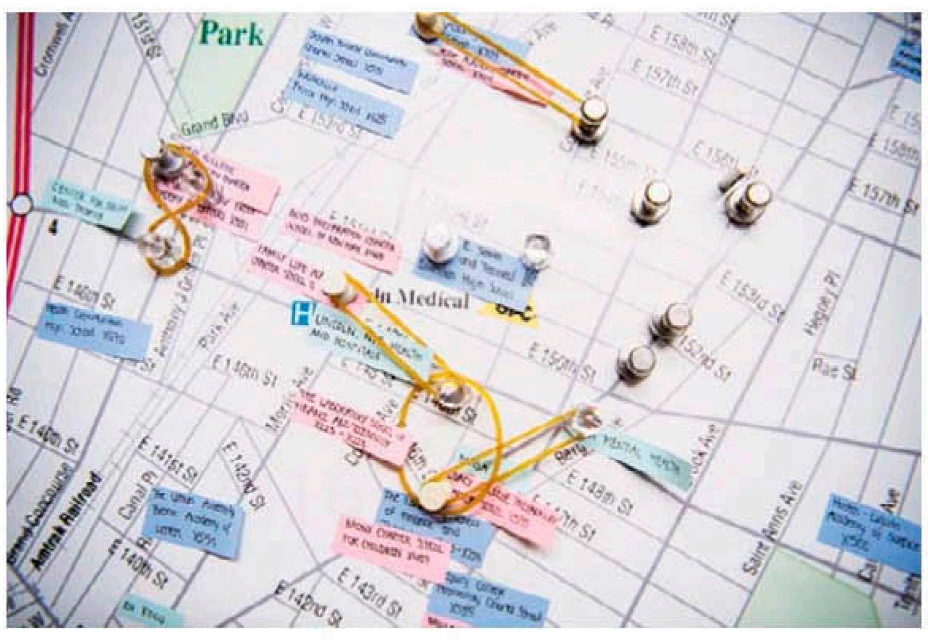
More and More Teenagers Are Coming to School High, Teachers Say

Classrooms in Disarray, New York City Students And Instructors Observe

By ASHLEY SOUTHALL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTAINY NEWMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES





Above, one teenager selling cannabis to another near a high school in the Bronx. At the Bronx Documentary Center, Arwen Polanco, 16, far left center, and others mapped the smoke shops near schools in the area, left.

Ever since Justin, a 15-year-old high school freshman, tried marijuana on his birthday two years ago, he has smoked almost every day, several times a day, he said.

"If I smoke a blunt, after that blunt I'm going to be chill," he said on a recent morning at a corner deli near his school, the Bronx Design and Construction Academy. "I'm not going to be stressing about nothing at all."

Another boy came by and flashed two glass tubes of smokable flower. More students were smoking across the street in a doorway and on a stoop. On another corner, a smoke shop frequented by children in backpacks and uniforms opened about half an hour before the first bell.

While it has long been common for some teens to smoke marijuana, teachers and students say that more and younger students are smoking throughout the day and at school.

There is little definitive data on marijuana use among children, and what information is available can sometimes offer a contradictory picture. Disciplinary data from the city education department reflects a 10 percent increase in alcohol- and drug-related offenses this year compared to 2019. But a city survey found teen cannabis use had declined in 2021, the same year that the state legalized marijuana for recreational use, to the lowest level recorded since the question was added to the survey in 1997.

Still, two dozen students and teachers at public, private and charter schools across the city said in interviews that some classrooms were in disarray as more pupils showed up late and high.

They said that with the proliferation of unlicensed smoke shops and the availability of vape pens and edible products, cannabis has never been more accessible and inconspicuous. They relayed accounts of students taking hits of vaping pens when teachers turned their backs, of bathrooms and stairwells becoming smoking lounges and of the smell of weed wafting through school hallways.

Teachers across high schools in the city said it was rare to catch students in the act of smoking, given the increasing ease, leaving reports to be made based on more opaque judgment calls of the students' smell and behavior.

"It really feels like this unstoppable tide that we're futilely trying to suppress," said America Billy, 44, who has been teaching at a public high school in Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn, for over a decade. She said it was hard to know whether a student was out of it because of a lack of sleep, family stress or drugs.

In December, a former principal, April McKoy, described in a letter how students' cannabis use had spiraled out of control during her last two years in charge of City Polytechnic High School of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology in Brooklyn.

"It felt like more and more were using without knowing the source, impact or consequences of early marijuana use," Ms. McKoy said in the letter, adding that students had returned after the pandemic "sad, isolated and trying to find ways to cope."

Freshmen were selling cannabis to each other, and she said she witnessed a smoke shop sell edibles to 14-year-olds with police officers nearby. On another occasion, she sent four students to the hospital because they were sickened from contaminated edibles, she said.

The proliferation of unlicensed smoke shops, which the city says may number as many as 1,500, could be one factor driving marijuana use among children, officials said.

Gale Brewer, a city councilwoman, said that though she had counted fewer than 10 of them in her district on the Upper West Side of Manhattan in September, there were 64 by March. Several school administrators have complained to her about merchants selling joints and infused candies as well as high-potency concentrates and vapes to students.

"We were all saying we need social workers, we need psychologists, we need mental health support in the schools," she said. But dealing with smoke shops selling to children "was not on the list."

Mayor Eric Adams has vowed to crack down on unlicensed smoke shops, though he has not taken sweeping action. In February, his administration filed nuisance abatement lawsuits targeting a handful of stores where the police said underage auxiliary officers were able to buy marijuana. At the same time, Alvin Bragg, the Manhattan district attorney, sent letters to shops threatening to evict them, but so far his office has not initiated any proceedings.

In Albany, state lawmakers passed budget legislation in April that expanded the powers of state cannabis regulators and tax authorities to close unlicensed stores and impose hefty fines for illicit sales. Mr. Adams's office praised the measure, but urged the state to give the city additional enforcement powers to rein in illicit smoke shops.

Jenna Lyle, a spokeswoman for the Education Department, said schools offer a range of programs aimed at addressing and preventing substance abuse among students, including specialists who provide counseling in schools. But last year, there were just 280 specialists for the city's 1,600 schools, Chalkbeat has reported.

Esther Lelievre, a cannabis activist who conducts educational workshops at schools at community centers, said that many of the students who use cannabis said they had started out vaping nicotine, a phenomenon that was on the rise before the pandemic. Few of the students she has worked with obtained their marijuana from smoke shops, she said. Most got it from friends who had access to a dealer or to cannabis at home.

At the Bronx Documentary Center, a nonprofit photo gallery and educational space near Justin's school, students in its journalism program have set out to bring more awareness to cannabis use among kids after witnessing the change in their peers.

They mapped all of the smoke shops and schools in the neighborhood with push pins, and connected those that were closest with rubber bands. Showing the map during a recent evening class, Cara-Star Tyner, 15, noted that one of the rubber bands did not stretch.

"That's how close it is," she said.

One of the shops, Puff Puff Pass 1, was visible through the window of their workroom. On a recent morning, The Times observed two teenagers in backpacks and uniforms make a purchase in the store, then later enter a high school building. Two days later, a man who identified himself as the shop's owner, Mike Alramada, 35, said he did not sell tobacco or marijuana to students. As he spoke, he was interrupted by teenagers ringing his doorbell to be let inside the shop, which also stocked some drinks and other grocery items.

The journalism students said they were disappointed in the adults who ran their schools, their city and the smoke shops, and they hoped that bringing attention to the issue would finally prompt the authorities to act.

"I hope that adults realize they're not doing their job," Alexa Pacheco, who attends a Catholic school in the Bronx, said. "A teenager should not be worried about their friends using drugs."

Lauren McCarthy contributed reporting.

A smoke shop near a Bronx school. Officials said a rise in shops may be a factor driving marijuana use among children.

In New York City, a Ban on Weight and Height Discrimination Is Signed Into Law

By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS

Mayor Eric Adams on Friday signed into law a ban on discrimination in New York City based on a person's weight.

The law adds weight and height to the list of characteristics that are protected from discrimination, along with race, gender, age, religion and sexual orientation, and will apply to employment, housing and access to public accommodations.

Mr. Adams, a Democrat in his second year in office, had expressed support for the bill, which was approved by the City Council earlier this month.

Mr. Adams, who published a book in 2020 about losing 35 pounds on a plant-based diet, said on Friday that the law would make workplaces more inclusive and that people who are applying for a job should not be treated differently.

"Science has shown that body type is not a connection to if you're healthy or unhealthy," he said. "I think that's a misnomer that we're really dispelling."

Why It Matters

The law is part of a growing national campaign to address weight discrimination, with lawmakers in New Jersey and Massachusetts considering similar measures. Michigan and Washington State already prohibit it, as do some cities, like Washington, D.C.

New Yorkers testified at a City Council hearing earlier this year about being discriminated against because of their weight. A student at New York University said that desks in classrooms were too small for her. A soprano at the Metropolitan Opera said she had faced body shaming and pressure to develop an eating disorder.

Some business leaders and Republicans had expressed concerns about the bill, including Kathryn S. Wylde, president of the Partnership for New York City, a business advocacy group, who said that it could be an onerous mandate for companies and would place a burden on regulators and the judicial system.

Background

Obesity rates have risen in the United States over the last two decades, and more than 40 percent of American adults are considered obese.

The body acceptance movement and self-described fat activists have sought to reduce bias and shame around weight. Podcasts like "Maintenance Phase" have spread awareness that not all overweight people are unhealthy and that diets often fail.

New York City has been a center for fat activism since at least the 1960s, when a crowd of 500 people held a "fat in" at Central Park.

Tigress Osborn, chair of the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, a nonprofit advocacy group, said she hoped that other cities would approve similar laws to send the message that size discrimination was a "serious injustice."

The bill's sponsor, Shaun Abreu, a councilman from northern Manhattan, said that he gained weight during the pandemic and noticed that people treated him differently. He said that the law would make employers think twice about discriminating against heavier people and raise awareness about the problem.

"It's also about changing the culture in how we think about weight," he said.

What's Next

Complaints about weight discrimination will be investigated by the city's Commission on Human Rights, which already examines complaints over race, gender and other issues.

State lawmakers in New York are also considering a weight discrimination law. The city law will take effect in 180 days.

Indiana Reprimands Doctor Who Provided Abortion to 10-Year-Old

By AVA SASANI

An Indiana doctor who provided an abortion to a 10-year-old rape victim last year violated her young patient's privacy by discussing the case with a reporter, the state's medical board ruled Thursday night.

Dr. Caitlin Bernard, an Indianapolis obstetrician-gynecologist, catapulted into the national spotlight last year after she provided an abortion for an Ohio girl soon after the Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, which left states free to severely restrict or outlaw abortion.

The state's medical board voted to issue Dr. Bernard a letter of reprimand and a fine of $3,000. But it

The state fined her for discussing the case with a reporter.

decided against stiffer penalties, which could have included suspension or probation, instead deciding that Dr. Bernard is fit to return to her practice.

The board also cleared her of other allegations that she failed to appropriately report the girl's rape to authorities.

The decision was the culmination of a yearlong legal pursuit of Dr. Bernard by the state's attorney general, Todd Rokita, a Republican who opposes abortion.

The Ohio girl had traveled to Indiana for the procedure after her home state enacted a ban on most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy. Dr. Bernard told a reporter for The Indianapolis Star about the case during an abortion rights rally. She didn't name the patient, but the case quickly became a flash point in the early, heated days of debate after the Supreme Court ruling, catching the attention of President Biden and turning conservative attention and ire toward Dr. Bernard.

"I don't think she intended for this to go viral," said Dr. John Strobel, the president of the board, calling Dr. Bernard a "good doctor."

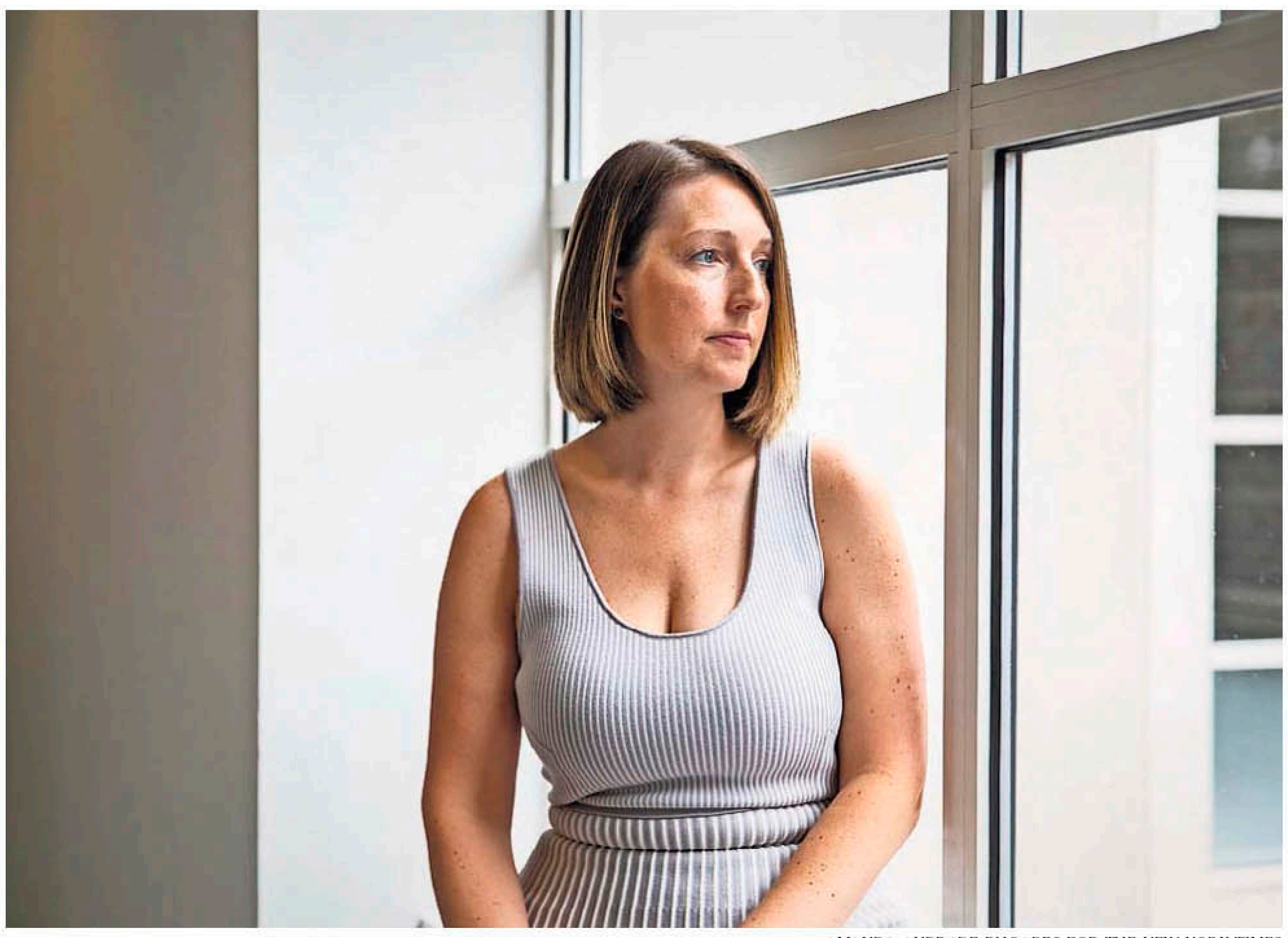
"But I do think we as physicians need to be more careful in this situation," he said.

Mr. Rokita, who had filed the complaints against Dr. Bernard with the medical board, praised the outcome.

"This case was about patient privacy and the trust between the doctor and the patient that was broken," Mr. Rokita said in a statement late Thursday. "What if it was your child or your patient or your sibling who was going through a sensitive medical crisis, and the doctor, who you thought was on your side, ran to the press for political reasons?"

Dr. Bernard has criticized Mr. Rokita for turning the case into a "political stunt."

During the hearing, which stretched for more than 15 hours, ending just before midnight, Dr. Bernard said that her own comments did not reveal the patient's protected health information. Rather, Dr. Bernard said, it was the fierce political battle that followed. Some conservatives doubted her story and drove a demand to confirm it. Eventually, the man accused of raping the girl appeared in court and was linked to her case.



AMANDA ANDRADE-RHOADES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Dr. Caitlin Bernard, an obstetrician-gynecologist who provided an abortion for a young rape victim.

Dr. Bernard, who has publicly advocated for abortion rights, said she had an ethical obligation to educate the public about urgent matters of public health, especially questions about reproductive health — her area of expertise.

Last July, after Indiana scheduled a special legislative session on abortion, Dr. Bernard was concerned that lawmakers in her home state would pass strict restrictions on abortion access similar to the Ohio law that forced her 10-year-old patient to cross state lines.

Indiana passed legislation banning most abortions, with narrow exceptions for rape and incest. That law is on hold pending a legal challenge. Abortion is currently legal in Indiana up to 22 weeks.

Dr. Bernard said she wanted to highlight the potential consequences of laws restricting abortion access, and "did not anticipate" how much the public would focus on the Ohio girl's case.

"I think its incredibly important for people to understand the real-word impacts of the laws of this country," she said.

Dr. Peter Schwartz, a Pennsylvania OB-GYN and chair of the American Medical Association's Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, supported Dr. Bernard's decision to speak out about the Ohio patient.

Dr. Schwartz said Dr. Bernard had an "affirmative obligation to speak out" about issues of reproductive health, noting that she is one of just two doctors in Indiana with expertise in complicated obstetric cases like second-trimester abortions.

Attorneys on both sides of the hearing called experts on medical confidentiality to understand if Dr. Bernard violated guidelines of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, known as HIPAA, which governs the protection of patient privacy.

Dr. Bernard's employer, Indiana University Health, found that she did not violate HIPAA rules because the patient was not identifiable based on the information that Dr. Bernard had shared publicly.

"The cause and effect that happened here was not: 'Dr. Bernard's story leads to the patient having her protected information shared,'" said Alice Morical, the doctor's attorney.

But members of the medical board, made up of six doctors and one attorney — all appointed by the governor — decided that, taken together, the details Dr. Bernard provided about the patient — including her age, her rape, her home state and her abortion — qualified as identifying information.

"Dr. Bernard is a skilled and competent doctor, and I would submit that she is exactly the doctor that people would want their children to see under these circumstances," said Ms. Morical.

Pandemic Policy's End Is Pushing Americans Off Medicaid Rolls

From Page A1

that more outreach was needed to help those who lost coverage that way. He said federal officials were in regular contact with state officials around the country to review early data on the unwinding and check whether people who lost coverage had a fair shot to prove their eligibility.

Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders of Arkansas, a Republican, has framed the unwinding as a necessary process that will save money and allow Medicaid to function within its intended scope.

"We're simply removing ineligible participants from the program to reserve resources for those who need them and follow the law," Ms. Sanders wrote in an opinion essay in The Wall Street Journal this month. She added that "some Democrats and activist reporters oppose Arkansas's actions because they want to keep people dependent on the government."

Medicaid, which is financed jointly by the federal government and the states, has become an in-

At least 19 states have begun to cut benefits, and many children are being affected.

creasingly far-reaching component of the American safety net. Early this year, 93 million people — more than one in four Americans — were enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program, up from 71 million before the pandemic.

What has played out in Arkansas so far offers evidence of the widespread disruption that the unwinding process is likely to cause in households across the country in the coming months, forcing Americans to find new insurance or figure out how to regain Medicaid coverage that they lost for procedural reasons. The federal government has projected that about 15 million people will lose coverage, including nearly seven million people who are expected to be dropped despite still being eligible.

Among the biggest looming questions is how the process will affect children. In Florida, for instance, a boy in remission from leukemia and in need of a biopsy recently lost his coverage.

Researchers at the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families estimated before the unwinding that more than half of children in the United States were covered by Medicaid or CHIP. Many children who lose coverage will be dropped for procedural reasons even though they are still eligible, said Joan Alker, the center's executive director.

"Those kids have nowhere else to turn for coverage," she said. "Medicaid is the single largest insurer for children. This is hugely consequential for them."

In Arkansas, many of the children who lost Medicaid were "the poorest of the poor," said Loretta Alexander, the health policy director for Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. She added that losing coverage would be especially harmful for young children who need regular developmental checkups early in life.

Most states are taking around a year to complete the unwinding, with each one using its own approach to removing people from Medicaid. But in Arkansas, legislation passed in 2021 required state officials to complete the process in just six months. State officials checked the eligibility of children with Medicaid coverage early in the process because they make up a substantial share of those who are enrolled, according to Gavin Lesnick, a spokesman for the state's Department of Human Services.

In her opinion essay, Ms. Sanders pointed to the campaign that the state has waged to alert residents to the unwinding, called Renew Arkansas.

"We hired extra staff and enlisted volunteers to help," she wrote. "We texted, emailed and called tens of thousands of Arkansans who likely are now ineligible for Medicaid, and we have made a special effort to reach out to those with disabilities, those who have moved, those with afflictions like cancer, those receiving dialysis and women who are pregnant."

Local health workers like Ms. Buford are trying to help people regain coverage if they still qualify for it. She said that she had worked with 50 to 75 Medicaid recipients who had lost coverage in April, helping them fill out forms or answering their questions about how to verify their eligibility.

Other states have also removed a large number of Medicaid recipients for procedural reasons. In Indiana, nearly 90 percent of the roughly 53,000 people who lost Medicaid in the first month of the state's unwinding were booted on those grounds. In Florida, where nearly 250,000 people lost Medicaid coverage, procedural reasons were to blame for a vast majority.

In addition to taking different approaches to removing people from Medicaid, states are also releasing data about their progress in different ways, making it difficult to compare their strategies in the early stages of the unwinding. "We're comparing apples to oranges to tangerines," Ms. Alker said.

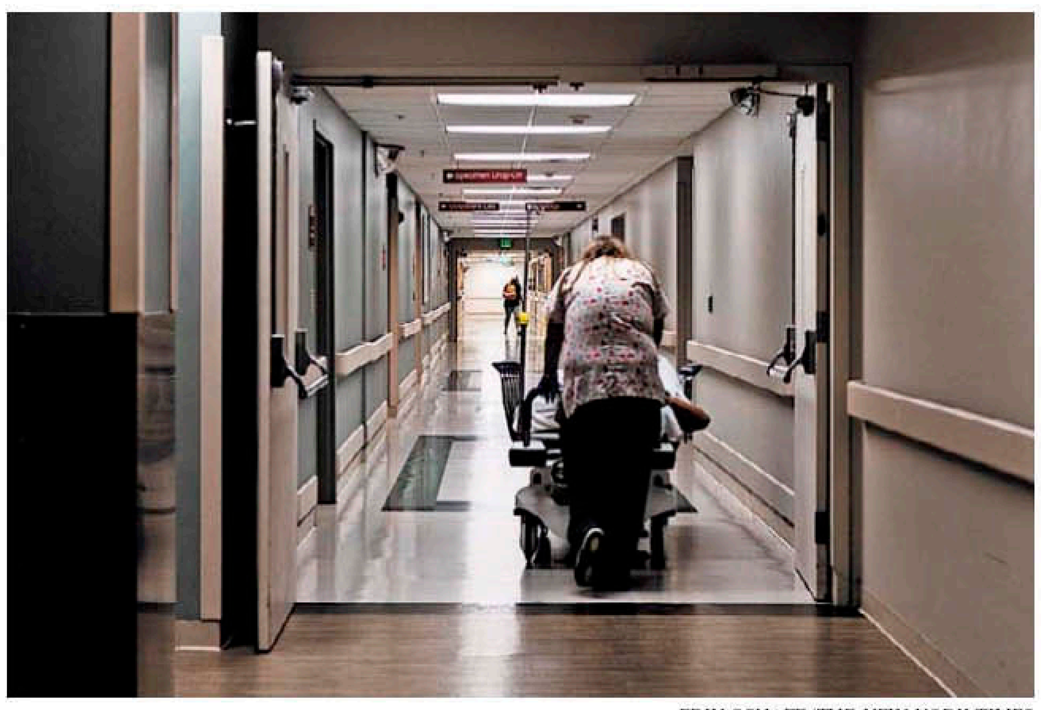
Some people who lose Medicaid coverage are expected to get health insurance through their employer. Others are likely to turn to the Affordable Care Act's marketplaces to sign up for private insurance, and many of them will be eligible for plans with no premiums.

Debra Miller, 54, of Bullhead City, Ariz., lost Medicaid coverage in April after her roughly $25,000

WHITTEN SABBATINI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Melissa Buford, a diabetic with high blood pressure who earns about $35,000 a year, is no longer eligible for Medicaid in Arkansas because her income rose. Her two adult sons also lost coverage.

AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders of Arkansas, left, has framed the unwinding as a necessary process that will save money and allow Medicaid to function within its intended scope. Right, a hospital in Arkansas. About 73,000 people in the state lost coverage in April, including about 27,000 children.

annual salary as a Burger King cook left her ineligible. Ms. Miller, a single mother with diabetes and hypothyroidism, worked with an insurance counselor at North Country HealthCare, a network of federally funded health clinics, to enroll in a marketplace plan with a roughly $70 monthly premium.

"It's a struggle because it's a new bill that I haven't had before," she said. Her new plan, she added, does not include vision insurance, leaving her worried about paying for eye appointments she needs as a diabetic.

Ms. Buford said that for some people in Arkansas, marketplace coverage would be too expensive.

"You have a car, mortgage, kids, food," she said. "You really don't have that much left to pay that much for health insurance."

Ms. Buford said that her job helping others find health insurance in underserved areas was a calling inspired by watching her grandmother struggle to afford her medications and rely on food pantries. Ms. Buford went to a community college near her hometown so she could take care of her sick father, who passed away in his 40s. "I love my job because I'm able to help people," she said.

Now that she has lost her Medicaid coverage, Ms. Buford said she hoped to find an affordable marketplace plan in the near future. The family plan offered by the clinic where she works is too costly, she said.

"I'm grateful for what I have because someone else doesn't have what I have," Ms. Buford said. "I just wish I could have kept my Medicaid."

Judge Halts Abortion Ban In S. Carolina

By AVA SASANI

A South Carolina judge on Friday temporarily blocked a new law restricting abortion access after six weeks of pregnancy.

The order came just one day after Gov. Henry McMaster, a Republican, signed the six-week ban into law, and temporarily restores abortion access in the state to up to 22 weeks of pregnancy.

Greenville Women's Clinic — an abortion provider in South Carolina — and Planned Parenthood South Atlantic sued the state shortly after Mr. McMaster signed the law.

"The status quo should be maintained" until the Supreme Court can weigh in, said Judge Clifton Newman in his order blocking the new ban.

Why It Matters

South Carolina has become an important access point for abortion in the South as other states in the region have banned it.

"Our doors remain open, and we are here to provide compassionate and judgment-free health care to all South Carolinians," said Jenny Black, president and chief executive of Planned Parenthood South Atlantic.

Background

South Carolina legislators struggled for months to come to an agreement on an abortion ban after the Supreme Court last year overturned Roe v. Wade and eliminated the national right to abortion. Republicans fought over how far a ban should go, and what exceptions to allow.

Three Republican women were part of a group of legislators who had tried to block a near-total ban.

The ban that finally passed prohibits most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy and requires any woman seeking an abortion to first have two in-person doctor's visits and two ultrasounds.

The law allows exceptions for victims of rape and incest, and in cases of fatal fetal abnormalities or where the woman's life and health are at risk, but those exceptions are only available up to 12 weeks of pregnancy.

The ban is similar to an earlier six-week ban overturned by the State Supreme Court last year, known as a heartbeat bill, because cardiac activity can be detected around that time.

The court ruled that the South Carolina Constitution provides a right to privacy that includes the right to abortion.

"While I respect Judge Newman's decision, I remain convinced that the heartbeat bill is constitutional and that the Supreme Court will agree," said the Senate's president, Thomas Alexander, a Republican.

What's Next

The case now heads to the State Supreme Court.

Republican legislators said they made changes in the new law to address the court's objections to the previous law.

Facing Impeachment, Texas Official Cites Efforts for Right's Causes

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Project, a nonprofit that promotes and defends conservative judges. He described Mr. Paxton's style as "legal warfare."

Now, facing his own political showdown in the Texas House of Representatives on Saturday as the House prepares to vote on impeaching him, Mr. Paxton made the stakes plain for his Republican supporters.

In a news conference on Friday, he reminded them that he was "leading dozens of urgent challenges against Biden's unlawful policies" and said that the "illegal impeachment scheme" was playing into the Democrats' longstanding goal of removing him from office. He then called on supporters to come to the State Capitol on Saturday "to peacefully come let their voices be heard."

Mr. Paxton's position at the forefront of an increasingly confident and assertive effort by conservatives to use the law to push policy goals has meant that even now, as he faces opposition from some of his own Republican colleagues, he counts as his defenders many influential voices in the current Republican Party.

"Few in America have done more to advance the conservative legal movement, stop the lawless Biden executive onslaught, and defend our shared values," wrote Stephen Miller, who served as a top adviser to Mr. Trump. "Stand with Ken."

"What the RINOs in the Texas State House are trying to do to America First patriot Ken Paxton is a disgrace," wrote Mr. Trump's son, Donald Trump Jr., casting Mr. Paxton's fight in some of the same terms that his father has used when battling with fellow Republicans he deems insufficiently conservative.

Mr. Paxton has led conservative legal challenges in states around the country, notably on immigration, where he has repeatedly challenged the Biden administration's approach to the border. He successfully forced the administration to reinstate a Trump-era policy that compelled migrants to remain in Mexico while awaiting immigration hearings, rather than be allowed to do so in the United States.

Mr. Paxton has also been leading a coalition of Republican-led states that for years has been trying to end an Obama-era program known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, which protects many migrants brought to the United States as children from deportation. Supporters of DACA have said that the program opened doors for many young people to finish college and enter the work force. Mr. Paxton and other opponents argued that it rewarded and encouraged illegal immigration. The protracted legal challenge has kept young undocumented people in a state of limbo.

"I've lost track of all the cases called Texas v. United States," said Josh Blackman, a constitutional law professor at South Texas College of Law Houston who has filed briefs in support of some of Mr. Paxton's cases.

During the Trump administration, Mr. Paxton would often go on defense, submitting letters and briefs in support of the Republican president when he faced lawsuits, such as over the ban on travel from certain countries and the repeal of DACA, Mr. Blackman said.

A legal settlement with former aides is the impetus for a legislature's actions.

Mr. Paxton has been active in other areas as well, joining challenges to gun regulations around the country and leading a coalition of 17 states in an antitrust suit against Google, arguing that the company had abused its market power with digital advertisements to quash competition and hurt consumers. And he led a group of states challenging the Obama administration's Affordable Care Act.

"He's the strongest conservative we've ever had as attorney general," said Matt Mackowiak, the chair of the Republican Party in Travis County, which includes Austin. "He's been at war with the establishment for some time."

Along the way, Mr. Paxton has made strong allies and many enemies, both among Democrats and within his own party, who have shuddered at the revelations of his various alleged misdeeds over the years, including using his office to try to conceal an extramarital affair. Most of those abuses were detailed in the 20 articles of impeachment presented to the Texas House on Thursday.

"My reaction to this is, frankly it's frustrating that it took our state leadership so long to do something about his corruption," said Rochelle Garza, a former Democratic nominee for attorney general who ran against Mr. Paxton in 2022. "They've been complicit with it for years."

When it came to the expensive pen, a spokesman for Mr. Paxton explained at the time that Mr. Paxton had mistakenly picked it up and later returned it. Nevertheless, his Democratic opponent in the attorney general's race in 2018 used the surveillance footage in an attack ad that also referenced Mr. Paxton's criminal indictment on the securities fraud charges, a case that is still pending. "He won't steal your pen," the ad noted of the Democrat. Mr. Paxton won the race.

The allegations that form the basis of the articles of impeachment, set to be voted on at 1 p.m. on Saturday, have been publicly known for several years. Many were revealed in 2020, after his top aides accused him of abuse of office, mostly to benefit an Austin real estate investor who had contributed to his campaign, and reported their concerns to the F.B.I. The federal agency began an investigation, but no charges have been filed.

Four of the aides, conservative lawyers and senior officials in the attorney general's office, were fired as a result. They subsequently filed suit.

The allegations prompted several Republican challengers to jump into the 2022 primary race against Mr. Paxton, including George P. Bush, the grandson of former President George H.W. Bush and the son of the former Florida governor, Jeb Bush. Mr. Paxton won a primary runoff against Mr. Bush with nearly 70 percent of the vote, taking almost every county in Texas.

The impeachment process began after Mr. Paxton and his former aides said in February that they had reached a $3.3 million settlement in their suit, contingent on the state paying for it. Mr. Paxton requested that the funds be added to the budget, but the speaker of the House, Dade Phelan, said he did not believe it was a good use of taxpayer money. A committee of the House instead began its investigation into the request and underlying allegations.

The committee's recommendation of impeachment for Mr. Paxton's "grave offenses" on Thursday marked the first official judgment that his actions warranted potential removal from office.

Mr. Paxton, in his news conference on Friday, demonstrated that he would put up a fight. "The House is poised to do exactly what Joe Biden has been hoping to accomplish since his first day in office," he said. "Sabotage our work, my work, as attorney general of Texas."

Throughout the day on Friday, Republicans across Texas received text messages urging them to support Mr. Paxton. The chair of the Republican Party of Texas, a grass-roots organization often at odds with establishment leaders, issued a statement calling the impeachment a "sham" that was "empowering Democrats."

Dan Rogers, the chair of the Republican Party in Potter County, which includes the city of Amarillo, sent a text message urging people to call their representative and voice support for Mr. Paxton. "He's standing up against the federal government's overreach and the 'deep state' that's coming after our state sovereignty and individual sovereignty," Mr. Rogers said in an interview.

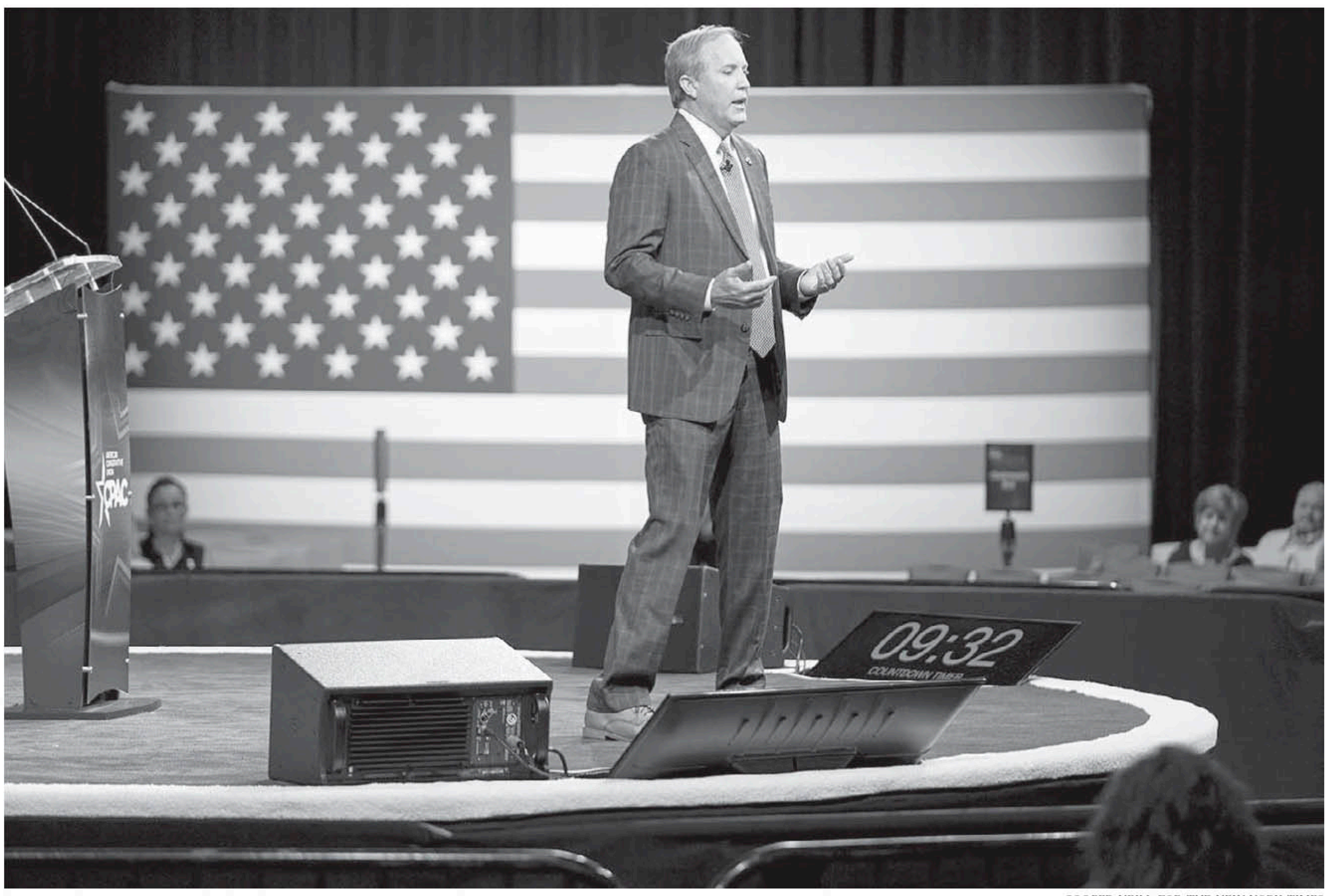
On the floor of the House on Friday, Republican members could be seen talking in small groups before the session got underway. In one instance, two members loomed over another who was seated and, in quiet but forceful tones, appeared to be urging him to vote no.

"It's hearsay, upon hearsay, upon hearsay," one of them said, referring to the articles of impeachment and the testimony given by House committee investigators.

Soon after, a loud bang briefly halted conversation in the room: A Houston Republican member, Sam Harless, had opened his wooden desk and then quickly shut it because inside was a rubber snake.

Some in the chamber erupted in laughter. Mr. Harless smiled but appeared a little shaken at the practical joke that briefly lightened the mood. "I hate snakes," he said.

Miriam Jordan and David Montgomery contributed reporting.



COOPER NEILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ken Paxton, the attorney general of Texas, at CPAC in 2021. He has been called "the tip of the spear" in conservative legal battles.

JAY JANNER/AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dade Phelan, the Texas House speaker, opposed using taxpayer funds for a $3.3 million settlement with Mr. Paxton's ex-aides.

A Culmination of Years Of Official Complaints And Legal Proceedings

By JACEY FORTIN and J. DAVID GOODMAN

The Republican-dominated Texas House has scheduled a vote on the impeachment of the state's Republican attorney general, Ken Paxton, for Saturday at 1 p.m.

The vote was set to take place just two days after a bipartisan but Republican-led committee of representatives recommended that Mr. Paxton should be impeached for a range of abuses that may have been crimes.

The attorney general has been handling various legal challenges for years, weathering multiple investigations with few political repercussions. On Friday, Mr. Paxton again denied any wrongdoing and invited supporters to "peacefully" make their voices heard during the impeachment vote at the State Capitol.

Here's what to know.

Who is Ken Paxton?

Before he become the attorney general in 2015, Warren Kenneth Paxton Jr. worked as a lawyer and state legislator, serving in both the State House and Senate. His wife, Angela Paxton, became a political force of her own and won a seat in the State Senate in 2018.

As the state's top law enforcement officer, Mr. Paxton has styled himself as a champion of the social issues that drive Texas conservatives, effectively becoming the state's chief culture-war litigator. His hard-charging style has led some Republican allies to distance themselves, even as voters have remained loyal.

Mr. Paxton has closely aligned himself with — and been endorsed by — former president Donald J. Trump, and he has used his office to challenge the results of the 2020 election. He has also mounted frequent legal challenges to actions by the Biden administration, and has been at the forefront of Republican-led states' attempts to challenge the president's efforts to ease some restrictions on migration on the U.S. southern border.

Voters re-elected Mr. Paxton to a third term by a wide margin in November.

What accusations prompted the House investigation?

In 2020, several senior members of Mr. Paxton's staff wrote a letter urging an investigation into the actions of their boss. The aides accused Mr. Paxton of using his office to serve the interests of Nate Paul, who was a friend of the attorney general and a political donor.

Mr. Paul, a wealthy real estate investor in Austin, had contacted Mr. Paxton after his home and offices were raided by federal agents in 2019. Mr. Paxton took the unusual step, against his staff's vociferous objections, of authorizing a state investigation of the F.B.I.'s actions. He appointed an outside lawyer who referred to himself as a special prosecutor to do it, though investigators for the House committee said that he had no prosecutorial experience. F.B.I. officials have not commented on their investigation.

At the time, Mr. Paxton said in a statement that he had "never been motivated by a desire to protect a political donor or to abuse this office, nor will I ever."

In their 2020 letter, Mr. Paxton's aides said that he had committed bribery, abuse of office and other "potential criminal offenses." Four of the aides also brought their concerns to the F.B.I. and Texas Rangers.

According to legal filings in the case, the four aides had also relayed their concerns to the attorney general's office; several weeks later, they were all fired. The aides filed suit after that, accusing Mr. Paxton of retaliating against them.

As the case proceeded, Mr. Paxton's office produced a 374-page report that concluded, "A.G. Paxton committed no crime." He has also challenged the suit, but a Texas court of appeals has ruled against him. In February, Mr. Paxton agreed to pay $3.3 million in a settlement with the four former senior aides.

How did that lead to the possibility of impeachment?

Questions over how to pay the settlement prompted more investigation into the 2020 allegations.

Mr. Paxton asked the Texas Legislature for the funds to pay the $3.3 million. Dade Phelan, the Republican House speaker, who is seen as a traditional conservative, did not support that use of state money. A House investigation into the allegations was begun in order to gather information about the funding request, Mr. Phelan's spokeswoman said.

Many of the investigators' findings about Mr. Paxton were already known publicly, from the allegations made in the aides' lawsuit. But the House committee vote on Thursday rendered the first official judgment on those allegations: They were, legislators said, enough to begin the process of removing Mr. Paxton from office.

What do the articles of impeachment say?

The committee filed 20 articles of impeachment against Mr. Paxton on Thursday. As they were being handed out around the House chamber, Andrew Murr, the chairman of the committee and a Republican, said that they described "grave offenses."

The articles charge Mr. Paxton with a litany of abuses including taking bribes, disregarding his official duty, obstructing justice in a separate securities fraud case pending against him, making false statements on official documents and reports, and abusing the public trust.

Many of the charges related to the various ways that Mr. Paxton had used his office to benefit Mr. Paul, the committee said, and then fire those in the office who spoke up against his actions.

The articles also accuse Mr. Paxton of benefiting "from Nate Paul's employment of a woman with whom Paxton was having an extramarital affair," and of intervening in a lawsuit filed against Mr. Paul's companies by the Roy F. and Joann Cole Mitte Foundation, an Austin nonprofit group.

What other legal issues are confronting Mr. Paxton?

A federal investigation, opened as a result of the aides' complaints about corruption and retaliation, has not yet resulted in any charges.

But Mr. Paxton has been under criminal indictment for most of his tenure as the state's attorney general.

In 2015, his first year in that office, Mr. Paxton was charged with felonies related to securities fraud and booked in a county jail outside Dallas. The charges stemmed from accusations that Mr. Paxton had misled investors and clients — for example, by failing to tell investors that he would make a commission on their investment — while doing securities work in the years before he became attorney general.

The attorney general in Texas has been accused of a wide range of abuses.

He has denied wrongdoing in the case, which has yet to go to trial.

This week's articles of impeachment accused the attorney general of obstruction of justice in that case, alleging that a lawsuit, which was filed by a donor to Mr. Paxton's campaign, effectively delayed the trial.

What happens next?

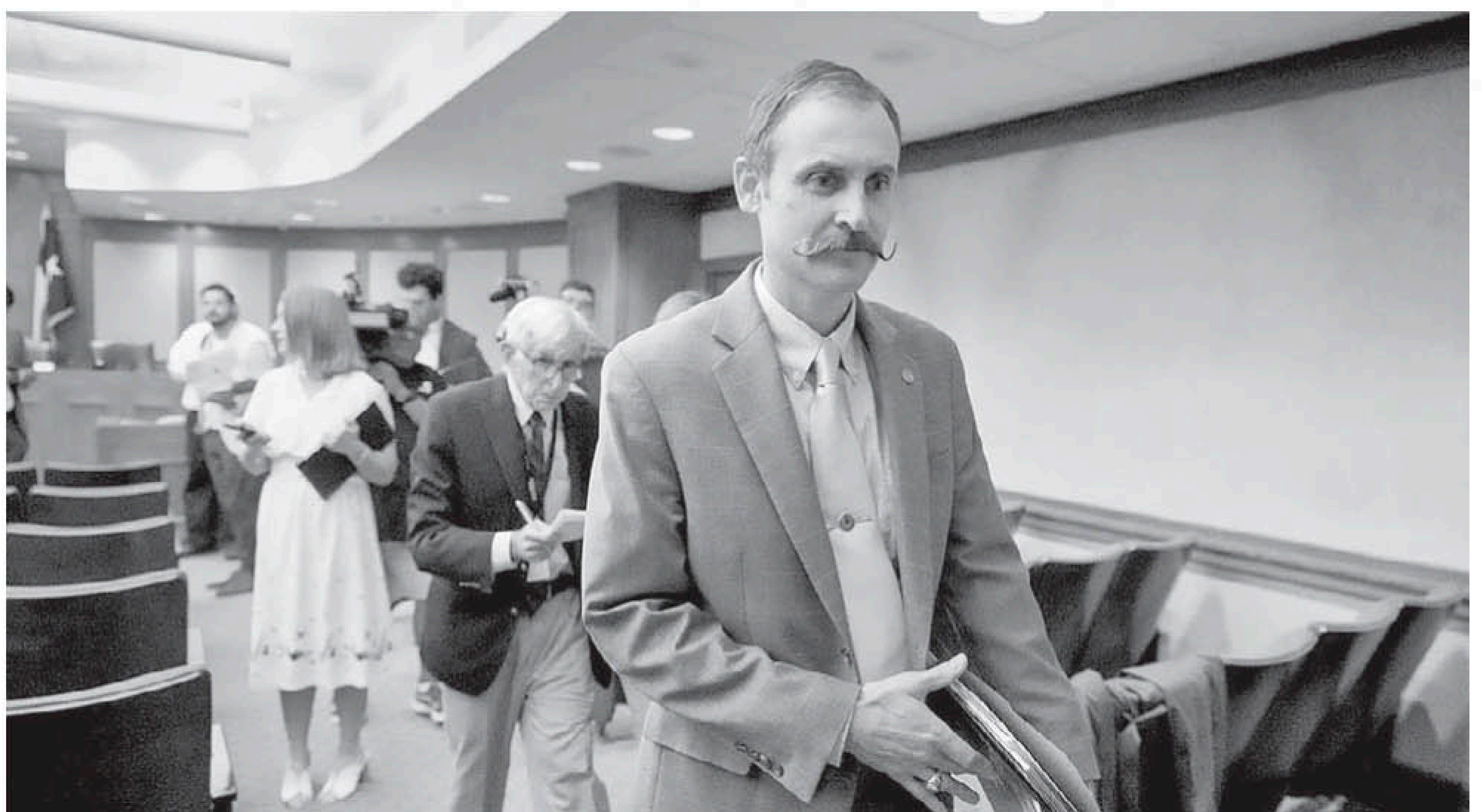
The chairman of the committee investigating Mr. Paxton said he intended to introduce the impeachment resolution for a House vote on Saturday at 1 p.m.

An impeachment would mean that Mr. Paxton would be temporarily removed from office pending a trial on the charges in the State Senate, where some of his closest allies, including his wife, would serve as jurors. The Senate proceedings could well be delayed until after the regular legislative session, which ends on Monday. The Senate could reconvene to hold the trial afterward, though the timing remains highly uncertain.

A lawyer from Mr. Paxton's office, Christopher Hilton, has said that the committee's process in issuing the articles of impeachment had been "completely lacking," and that the issues raised had been fully aired during Mr. Paxton's successful re-election campaign last year.

In what appeared to be a preview of a possible legal challenge to the proceedings, Mr. Hilton also said that Texas law allowed impeachment only for conduct since the preceding election. Most of the allegations in the articles of impeachment involve conduct that occurred before then.

Reporting was contributed by Manny Fernandez, Miriam Jordan, Edgar Sandoval and Rick Rojas.



JAY JANNER/AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Andrew Murr, the Republican chairman of the committee that filed the articles of impeachment.

KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

From left, Speaker Kevin McCarthy; Hakeem Jeffries, the House minority leader; and Representatives Garret Graves, left, and Patrick T. McHenry have found there's no escaping questions about a deal.

Frantic Negotiations, Late Nights and No Deal on America's Debt

By KATIE ROGERS and LUKE BROADWATER

WASHINGTON — On Capitol Hill, the delicate talks to avert default on the government's debts this week took place over middle-of-the-night video calls, marathon meetings in an opulent conference room, and at least one early morning bike ride.

At the White House, evening tour groups were diverted from the West Wing because President Biden was in the Oval Office with his chief of staff and other advisers, who needed his quick feedback.

But all of the talking has so far failed to produce a deal to raise the country's debt limit, raising fears of a potentially catastrophic default that could upend financial markets, spike interest rates and end in a downgrade of the nation's credit.

The negotiators got a bit of breathing room on Friday afternoon, when Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen said the United States could run out of money to pay its bills on time by June 5 — a slight extension from the previous forecast of as early as June 1.

But a week of frenetic and "productive" meetings has given those trapped in the negotiating room the distinct feeling that the days and nights were all running together.

"Here we are, night after night after night," said Representative Patrick T. McHenry of North Carolina, one of House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's top lieutenants.

"Everyone wants a detail of this," Mr. McHenry said, as a crowd of reporters demanded to know whether the country was going to descend into economic calamity or not. "Everyone wants a tweet. I want an agreement that changes the trajectory of the country."

As he spoke, the normally gregarious congressman telegraphed his fatigue in the smallest of ways: The bow tie he wears every day was gone.

Mr. McCarthy, who went for a bike ride on Friday morning with one of his key negotiators, Representative Garret Graves of Louisiana, weighed in with the obvious: "We got to make more progress now."

KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Here we are, night after night after night," said Mr. McHenry, telegraphing his fatigue in a tiny way, by losing his usual bow tie.

Though Mr. Biden and Mr. McCarthy have known each other for years and speak (mostly) respectfully about each other in public, their relationship has so far not been about finding comity but about extracting concessions.

"You have two Irish guys that don't drink," Mr. McHenry joked this week. "That's a different setup than Tip O'Neill and Ronald Reagan," a reference to Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., a Democrat, and the Republican president, who also shared Irish heritage, and were known to share a beer.

Mr. Biden's aides have been working around the clock since talks abruptly fell apart a week ago, leading to a Republican-imposed "pause" on talks that surprised members of the president's negotiating team. From Japan, Mr. Biden demanded frequent updates, and ended a scheduled dinner early to receive a briefing on the talks. On the last day of his trip, Mr. Biden's advisers back in Washington woke up at 4:30 a.m. to update him by video.

Since then, negotiators on both sides have met several times in a conference room on the House side of Capitol Hill, under a fresco painted by the artist Constantino Brumidi that depicts "a retired Roman general recalled to defend his city, a classical event often seen as parallel to the life of George Washington," according to the Architect of the Capitol's website.

Descriptions of the meetings themselves have not been nearly as colorful. Mr. McHenry expressed dismay this week at all the people pretending to know what was happening.

"Everybody wants to have conjecture or wants to have some self-serving read about what we're talking about, but there's just a few of us in the room," he said.

Mr. Biden's team of negotiators has been led by Shalanda D. Young, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Steve Ricchetti, the counselor to the president, who has been Mr. Biden's liaison to Capitol Hill since his days as vice president. Mr. Ricchetti has been ferried back and forth along Pennsylvania Avenue all week, moving between White House meetings and meetings with Republicans, according to a person familiar with his schedule.

Throughout the negotiations, Mr. Ricchetti has been the lone member of the team empowered to make strategic decisions on Mr. Biden's behalf, according to two people familiar with the talks. (He is also one of the few people who is empowered to answer the president's phone on Mr. Biden's behalf when they are together.)

The group also includes Louisa Terrell, the legislative affairs director. Both she and Ms. Young have deep relationships on Capitol Hill; Ms. Young was a longtime staff member on the House Committee on Appropriations who has built up respect with both Republicans and Democrats, according to several former administration officials. Ms. Terrell's experience on Capitol Hill dates back to Mr. Biden's Senate office.

Their experience will be key in continuing to sell members on any deal that may come, according to several people involved. When Capitol Hill negotiators traveled to the White House midweek, they met at a conference room near Ms. Young's suite of offices in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Mr. Biden gets daily updates from Jeffrey D. Zients, his chief of staff. Mr. Zients has not been as involved in the external negotiations, people familiar say, but he is leading the strategy that guides those meetings from the White House. He is in regular contact with Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the majority leader, and Representative Hakeem Jeffries, the House's top Democrat. (Mr. Schumer said in a statement that the president's negotiators are "available when we have questions.")

Mr. Biden is also working closely with Bruce Reed, a senior policy adviser who was Mr. Biden's chief of staff during the debt-ceiling talks in 2011 and 2013, and Lael Brainard, his top economic adviser.

Mr. Biden, who does not believe in negotiating in public has stayed comparatively quiet except to say on Thursday that he and Mr. McCarthy have "a very different view of who should bear the burden of additional efforts to get our fiscal house in order."

As such, at the Capitol, the negotiators have taken on a kind of celebrity status among reporters, with scrums of dozens of journalists trailing them and hanging on their every word for any insight into the talks.

Non-reporters were less enraptured: As a mob of journalists chased Mr. Graves out of the Capitol on Friday afternoon, pressing themselves against one another to get within earshot, an onlooker said, "I don't even know who that is."

Mr. McCarthy has begun talking to the media several times a day, often repeating the same talking points but never missing the opportunity to get his side out to the public. (At least twice he has walked into the middle of a reporter's live TV appearance, adopted a broad smile and started speaking to the people watching at home.)

Mr. Graves, a media-shy Louisiana Republican, tried to meet with the members of the Louisiana State University women's national basketball championship team on Thursday as reporters trailed him in search of any scrap of information: "Didn't you see the speaker?" he told a pack of journalists at one point, trying to redirect them away from him.

Despite all the interest, the House ended its votes for the week on Thursday morning, with most of the lawmakers happy to leave Washington. Some Democrats stayed behind to shame their Republican colleagues for skipping town with an economic calamity looming.

"America may run out of the ability to pay our bills and extreme MAGA Republicans have chosen to get out of town before sundown," Mr. Jeffries said from the House floor.

Soon, most of the Democrats left too. The country might default on its debt in a little over a week. But first, there was Memorial Day weekend.

Yellen Expects U.S. Will Run Out of Cash by June 5

By ALAN RAPPEPORT

WASHINGTON — Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen said on Friday that the United States will run out of money to pay its bills on time by June 5, moving the goal post back slightly while maintaining the urgency for congressional leaders to reach a deal to raise or suspend the debt limit.

The letter provided the most precise date yet for when the United States is expected to run out of cash. Ms. Yellen had previously said the nation could hit the so-called X-date — the moment when it does not have enough money to pay all of its bills on time — as soon as June 1.

Ms. Yellen's letter comes as the White House and House Republicans have been racing to reach a deal that would lift the nation's $31.4 trillion borrowing cap and prevent the United States from defaulting on its debt. The Treasury Department hit its statutory debt limit on Jan. 19 and has been employing accounting maneuvers — known as "extraordinary measures" — to ensure the United States can continue paying its bills on time.

On Friday evening, President Biden expressed hope that an agreement could be clinched.

"Things are looking good. I'm very optimistic," Mr. Biden said as he departed the White House for Camp David, adding, "I'm hopeful we'll know by tonight whether we are going to be able to have a deal."

While Ms. Yellen's letter to lawmakers provides a tiny bit of wiggle room, it also makes clear the dire financial situation that Treasury is facing. The federal government is required to make more than $130 billion in scheduled payments during the first two days of June — including money to veterans and Social Security and Medicare recipients.

Those payments will leave the Treasury Department with "an extremely low level of resources." Ms. Yellen went on to detail billions of dollars of required cash transfers, expenditures and investments in programs such as the Social Security and Medicare trust funds that will further deplete its cash reserves.

"Our projected resources would be inadequate to satisfy all of these obligations," Ms. Yellen wrote.

Representative Patrick T. McHenry, a North Carolina Republican who is a key player in the talks, said the Treasury Department's more precise date "puts additional pressure on us."

Even before the letter was sent, Mr. McHenry said he was cognizant of how little time remained to prevent a default.

"We've got to be in the closing hours because of the timeline," he said. "I don't know if it's in the next day or two or three, but it's got to come together."

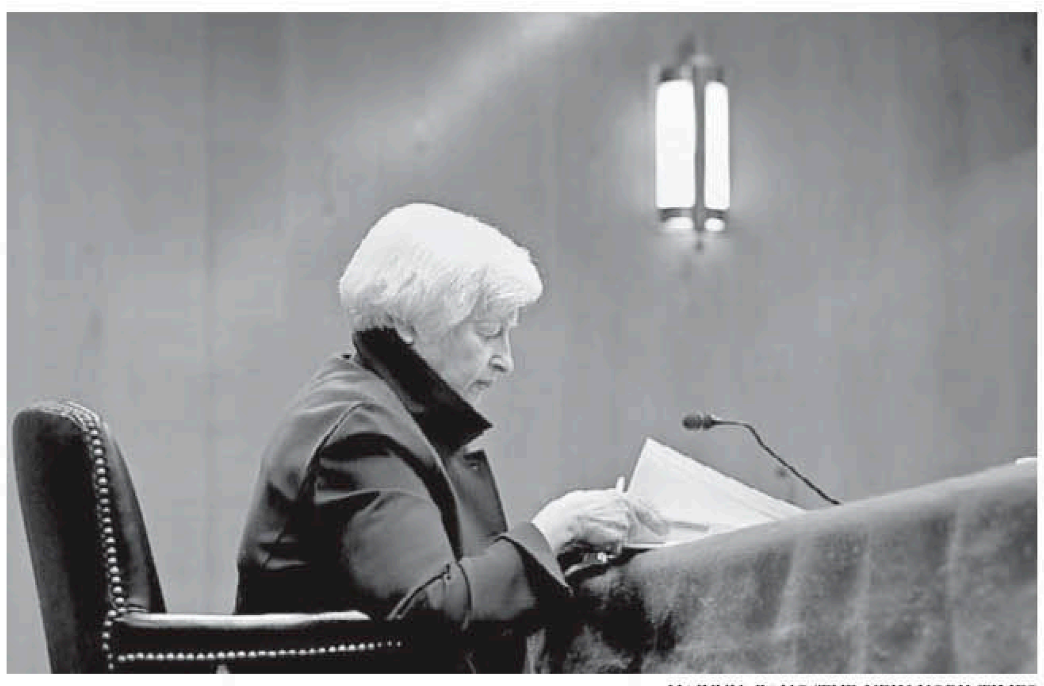
For months, Ms. Yellen has been warning lawmakers that the United States could run out of cash to pay all of its bills on time in early June.

The Treasury secretary said earlier this week that she would try to include more precision in future updates about when a default might occur. Some House Republicans have expressed doubt that ita default could be approaching so quickly, and they have called on the Treasury secretary to appear before Congress and present her full analysis.

Earlier this week, members of the House Freedom Caucus, a group of conservative Republicans, wrote a letter to Speaker Kevin McCarthy, Republican of California, urging party leaders to demand that Ms. Yellen "furnish a complete justification" of her projection that the United States could run out of cash as soon as June 1. They accused Ms. Yellen of "manipulative timing" and suggested that her forecasts should not be trusted because she was wrong about how hot inflation would get.

Other independent analyses have also pegged early June as the most likely moment when the United States will hit the X-date. The Bipartisan Policy Center said earlier this week that the U.S. faced an "elevated risk" of running out of cash to pay its bills between June 2 and 13 if Congress does not raise or suspend the nation's debt limit.

While negotiators have been in round-the-clock talks, no deal has yet been announced. Still, the contours of an agreement between the White House and Republicans are taking shape. That deal would raise the debt limit for two years while imposing strict caps on discretionary spending not related to the military or veterans for the same period.



HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Our projected resources would be inadequate to satisfy all of these obligations," Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen wrote.

As officials have been negotiating, the federal government has been running on fumes. The Treasury Department's cash balance fell to $38.8 billion on Thursday, as the United States inched toward running out of cash to meet its financial obligations.

Biden administration officials continued to downplay the possibility that the Treasury Department could avoid a default beyond the X-date by prioritizing payments to bondholders. They also dismissed provocative steps such as invoking the 14th Amendment as a way to continue borrowing and instead reiterated calls on Congress to lift the debt limit.

"Congress has the ability to do that, and the president is calling on them to act on that as quickly as possible," Wally Adeyemo, the deputy Treasury secretary, told CNN on Friday.

Lael Brainard, director of the White House's National Economic Council, pressed the negotiators to redouble their efforts to get a deal finalized.

"Negotiators have made progress toward a reasonable, bipartisan budget agreement in recent days, and the Secretary's letter underscores the urgent need for Congress to act swiftly to prevent default," Ms. Brainard said.

In her letter, Ms. Yellen also laid out the additional accounting maneuvers known as "extraordinary measures" that she was taking to delay a potential default until June 5. The actions involved moving $2 billion of Treasury securities between the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund and the Federal Financing Bank.

Financial markets have become more jittery as the United States moves closer to the deadline for avoiding a potential default. This week, Fitch Ratings said it was placing the nation's top AAA credit rating on review for a possible downgrade.

Ms. Yellen pointed out in her letter that the standoff is already straining financial markets.

"We have learned from past debt limit impasses that waiting until the last minute to suspend or increase the debt limit can cause serious harm to business and consumer confidence, raise short-term borrowing costs for taxpayers, and negatively impact the credit rating of the United States," she wrote.

Luke Broadwater contributed reporting.

Corrections

INTERNATIONAL

An article on Friday about the capture of a fugitive in Rwanda misstated the name of a branch of the Rwandan military that has been disbanded. It was the Armed Forces of Rwanda, not the Rwanda Defense Force.

ARTS

An article on Friday about films at the Cannes Film Festival that focus on female desire misstated the relationship at the center of "May December." It is between an older woman and an underage boy, not a teacher and pupil. The article also misidentified the award given to "The Man Without a Past" in 2002. It was the Grand Jury Prize not the Palme d'Or.

MAGAZINE

An article on Page 30 about the worldwide housing crisis misstates the year the euro was introduced in Austria. It was 2002, not 1999.

OBITUARIES

Because of an editing error, an obituary on Thursday about Tina Turner misstated the current number of productions of "Tina: The Tina Turner Musical." In addition to the one touring the United States and the one in London, there are productions in Stuttgart, Germany, and Sydney, Australia.

An obituary on May 20 about the Rev. Timothy Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan misstated when he learned he had pancreatic cancer. It was June 2020, not December 2021. It also misstated where he was ordained. It was Hopewell, Va., not Boston. Because of an editing error, the obituary also referred incorrectly to the Redeemer church on West 83rd Street in Manhattan. It is the church's original location; it is not the main one. And because of another editing error, the obituary misidentified the seminary that Mr. Keller attended with Kathy Louise Kristy, whom he married in 1975. It was Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, from which he received a master's degree in 1975 — not Westminster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, where he received a doctorate in 1981.

Contact the Newsroom
To contact the newsroom regarding correction requests, please email corrections@nytimes.com.

Errors are corrected during the press run whenever possible, so some errors noted here may not have appeared in all editions.

Preparing for Default: There Is No Playbook

KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

There is no certainty the debt limit will be lifted before June 5, when the Treasury estimates it will run out of cash.

By JOE RENNISON and ALAN RAPPEPORT

The United States is inching closer to calamity, as lawmakers continue to spar over what it will take to raise the country's $31.4 trillion debt limit.

That has raised questions about what will happen if the United States does not raise its borrowing cap in time to avoid defaulting on its debt, along with how key players are preparing should the Treasury Department fail to repay its lenders.

Such a situation would be unprecedented, so it's difficult to say with certainty how it would play out. But it's not the first time investors and policymakers have had to contemplate the what-if.

While negotiators appear to be moving toward an agreement, time is short. There is no certainty that the debt limit will be lifted before June 5, when the Treasury now estimates the government will run out of cash to pay all of its bills on time, known as the X-date.

"We've got to be in the closing hours because of the timeline," said Representative Patrick McHenry, a North Carolina Republican who is involved in the talks. "I don't know if it's in the next day or two or three, but it's got to come together."

Big questions remain, including what could happen in the markets, how the government is planning for default and what happens if the United States runs out of cash.

Before the X-Date

Financial markets have become more jittery as the United States moves closer to the X-date. While exuberance over the profit-boosting expectations of artificial intelligence has helped the stock market recover, fears about the debt limit persist. On Friday, the S&P 500 rose 1.3 percent, a modest gain of 0.3 percent for the week.

This week, Fitch Ratings said it was placing the nation's top AAA credit rating on review for a possible downgrade. DBRS Morningstar, another rating firm, did the same on Thursday.

For now, the Treasury is still selling debt and making payments to its lenders.

That has helped mollify some concerns that the Treasury won't be able to repay debt coming due in full, as opposed to just an interest payment. That's because the government has a regular schedule of new Treasury auctions where it sells bonds to raise fresh cash. The auctions are scheduled so the Treasury receives its new borrowed cash at the same time that it pays off its old debts.

That allows the Treasury to avoid adding much to its outstanding $31.4 trillion debt load — something it can't do right now since it enacted extraordinary measures after coming within a whisker of the debt limit on Jan. 19. And it should give the Treasury the cash it needs to avoid any disruption to payments, at least for now.

This week, the government sold two-year, five-year and seven-year bonds. However, that debt doesn't settle — meaning the cash is delivered to the Treasury and the securities delivered to the buyers at the auction — until May 31, coinciding with three other securities coming due.

More precisely, the new cash being borrowed is slightly larger than the amount coming due, with the tricky act of balancing all of the money coming in and out pointing to the Treasury's challenge in the days ahead.

When all the payments are tallied, the government ends up with a little over $20 billion of extra cash, according TD Securities.

Some of that could go to the $12 billion of interest payments that the Treasury also has to pay that day. But as time goes on, and the debt limit becomes harder to avoid, the Treasury may have to postpone any incremental fundraising, as it did during the debt limit standoff in 2015.

After the X-Date, Before Default

The U.S. Treasury pays its debts through a federal payments system called Fedwire. Big banks hold accounts at Fedwire, and the Treasury credits those accounts with payments on its debt. These banks then pass the payments through the market's plumbing and via clearing houses, like the Fixed Income Clearing Corporation, with the cash eventually landing in the accounts of holders from domestic retirees to foreign central banks.

The Treasury could try to push off default by extending the maturity of debt coming due. Because of the way Fedwire is set up, in the unlikely event that the Treasury chooses to push out the maturity of its debt it will need to do so before 10 p.m. at the latest on the day before the debt matures, according to contingency plans laid out by the trade group Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association, or SIFMA. The group expects that if this is done, the maturity will be extended for only one day at a time.

Investors are more nervous that should the government exhaust its available cash, it could miss an interest payment on its other debt.

The first big test of that will come on June 15, when interest payments on notes and bonds with an original maturity of more than a year come due.

Moody's, the rating agency, has said it is most concerned about June 15 as the possible day the government could default. However, it may be helped by corporate taxes flowing into its coffers next month.

The Treasury can't delay an interest payment without default, according to SIFMA, but it could notify Fedwire by 7:30 a.m. that the payment will not be ready for the morning. It would then have until 4:30 p.m. to make the payment and avoid default.

If a default is feared, SIFMA — alongside representatives from Fedwire, the banks and other industry players — has plans in place to convene up to two calls the day before a default could occur and three further calls on the day a payment is due, with each call following a similar script to update, assess and plan for what could unfold.

"On the settlement, infrastructure and plumbing, I think we have a good idea of what could happen," said Rob Toomey, head of capital markets at SIFMA. "It's about the best we can do. When it comes to the long-term consequences, we don't know. What we are trying to do is minimize disruption in what will be a disruptive situation."

Default and Beyond

One big question is how the United States will determine if it has actually defaulted on its debt.

There are two main ways the Treasury could default: missing an interest payment on its debt, or not repaying its borrowings when the full amount becomes due.

That has prompted speculation that the Treasury Department could prioritize payments to bondholders ahead of other bills. If bondholders are paid but others are not, ratings agencies are likely to rule that the United States has dodged default.

But Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen has suggested that any missed payment will essentially amount to a default.

Shai Akabas, director of economic policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center, said an early warning sign that a default was coming could arrive in the form of a failed Treasury auction. The Treasury Department will also be closely tracking its expenditures and incoming tax revenue to forecast when a missed payment could happen.

At that point, Mr. Akabas said, Ms. Yellen is likely to issue a warning with the specific timing of when she predicts the United States will not be able to make all of its payments on time and announce the contingency plans she intends to pursue.

For investors, they will receive updates through industry groups tracking deadlines for the Treasury to notify Fedwire that it will not make a scheduled payment.

Rating firms have said a missed payment would merit a downgrade of America's debt — and Moody's has said it will not restore its AAA rating until the debt ceiling was no longer subject to political brinkmanship.

International leaders have questioned whether the world should continue to tolerate repeated debt-ceiling crises given the integral role the U.S. plays in the global economy. Central bankers, politicians and economists have warned that a default would most likely tip America into a recession, leading to aftershocks of corporate bankruptcies and rising unemployment.

But those are just some of the risks known to be lurking.

"All of this is uncharted waters," Mr. Akabas said. "There's no playbook to go by."

Luke Broadwater contributed reporting.

CONGRESSIONAL MEMO

A Lot Left to Do, and Not Much Time to Do It

By CARL HULSE

WASHINGTON — Senator Mitch McConnell had a message for Americans growing increasingly worried that the economy is going to crash if the federal debt ceiling is not raised: Just chill.

"Look, I think everybody needs to relax," Mr. McConnell, the Kentucky Republican and minority leader with deep experience in debt limit showdowns, told reporters back home earlier this week. "Regardless of what may be said about the talks on a day-to-day basis, the president and the speaker will reach an agreement. It will ultimately pass on a bipartisan vote in both the House and the Senate. The country will not default."

That may be a case of easier said than done. While Mr. McConnell, President Biden and Speaker Kevin McCarthy have repeatedly assured Americans that there will be no default, that guarantee is looking a little shakier with little more than a week to go before the U.S. Treasury is projected to run out of cash to pay its obligations.

Even if negotiators agree to a deal soon — an outcome that appeared within reach but still had not materialized as talks continued on Friday — there is still much to be done, not the least of which is winning approval in the House and Senate. That outcome is nowhere near certain given rising uneasiness — and some outright opposition — on both the right and left. At this point, no one can be absolutely certain that the United States won't tumble over the default cliff, even if no one involved wants that to happen. Time is short.

"No one can guarantee there won't be a default, if for no other reason than the clock is ticking down here pretty quickly," said G. William Hoagland, a longtime Republican budget guru on Capitol Hill who is now a senior vice president at the Bipartisan Policy Center. "We are on thin ice in a big way."

Negotiators got some breathing room Friday afternoon with the Treasury secretary's announcement that the default deadline had moved four days later, to June 5. But Congress will still be hard-pressed to act by then, and the brief extension might even be counterproductive, sapping some urgency to seal a deal.

SARAH SILBIGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator Mitch McConnell exuded confidence this week that Congress and the president would come to an agreement.

"We're within the window of being able to perform this, and we have to come to some really tough terms in these closing hours," said Representative Patrick T. McHenry, Republican of North Carolina and a lead negotiator for Mr. McCarthy. "We're going back on final, important matters, and it's just not resolved."

Since the beginning of the impasse, Mr. Biden and congressional leaders have sought to tamp down concern that a default would occur, essentially saying that it was unthinkable because Congress has narrowly avoided default before. After one of the high-level meetings at the White House, Senator Chuck Schumer, the New York Democrat and majority leader, cheered the fact that all four leaders had said default was off the table.

Part of their motivation in offering these constant reassurances was to bolster their own forces, calm the public and keep the financial markets from cratering as the talks wore on.

But President Biden changed his tune slightly during his visit to Japan last weekend, saying for the first time that if Republicans insisted on pushing the issue to the hilt, maybe default was an option after all.

"I can't guarantee that they wouldn't force a default by doing something outrageous," Mr. Biden told reporters. "I can't guarantee that."

Representative Hakeem Jeffries, Democratic of New York and the minority leader, expressed a similar sentiment when asked this week if he could still be certain the government would not default.

"Not with this group," he said, referring to Republicans, some of whom he suspects would not mind the financial chaos resulting from a default if they thought it could help them politically in 2024.

Mr. McCarthy, the House leader and a California Republican, has also stated repeatedly that there would be no default and on Friday emphasized that he believed that a positive outcome would be the result.

"I'm a total optimist," he told reporters as negotiations continued with no apparent breakthrough.

One way Mr. McCarthy has said a default could be avoided is for the Senate to pass and the president to sign the measure Republicans passed in the House raising the debt limit while making steep budget cuts and rolling back other Biden administration initiatives. But that is unlikely to happen even if the Treasury runs out of money. Mr. McCarthy has also ruled out an emergency short-term suspension of the debt ceiling.

Even an agreement between House Republicans and Mr. Biden would not end the drama; in some respects, it would be just the beginning.

House Republicans have a 72-hour rule for the time between when the legislation is made public and when it is to be voted on, a timeline that pushes the showdown ever closer to the Treasury's early June deadline.

Plus, with hard-right elements of the Republican conference joining progressive Democrats in expressing reservations about the deal taking shape, Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Jeffries may have to thread the needle to produce the necessary votes from both sides to win approval of the deal.

Mr. McCarthy and his leadership team will have to assess extremely accurately the number of Republicans committed to voting for any final budget deal with a debt limit increase attached. Then they will need to let Mr. Jeffries know the number of votes Democrats need to produce to make sure at least 218 lawmakers will support the package.

Miscalculation could mean disaster. With the nation in a dire financial crisis in September 2008, the House stunned the Bush administration by failing to pass its bank bailout program. In a chaotic turn of events on the House floor, the measure failed as many Republicans refused to back it despite presidential pleas and some Democrats balked as well. The stock market tumbled in real time as the vote unfolded. Four days later, rattled House members came back and approved the proposal with a few changes.

Some believe that it might require a similar scenario now to push the debt limit plan through Congress — a failed vote and market drop that underscores the economic consequences of a default and motivates lawmakers to act. Others would prefer it not come to that given the potentially severe ramifications of even a brief default.

"I have been of the optimistic view that it wouldn't happen, but the longer it goes on, the more likely it seems to me," said Mr. Hoagland, the budget expert. "Time has run out for getting this done, but I am just praying a default doesn't happen."

Treasury Balance Looks Like Petty Cash to Moguls

By LINDA QIU

WASHINGTON — The Treasury Department said its cash balance fell to $38.8 billion as of Thursday, as the United States inched toward running out of cash to pay its bills.

That was significantly lower than the $316 billion the department had in operating cash, which is held at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, at the start of the month.

Just how empty is the Treasury cash coffer? For comparison, $38.8 billion is on par with the gross domestic product of Bahrain and Paraguay and lower than the net worth of more than two dozen of the wealthiest people in the world. Of course, much of the assets of those billionaires are tied up in stocks, rather than liquid assets.

Here is a list of people with higher net worths than the U.S. cash reserves, according to Bloomberg News's Billionaire Index as of Thursday. (Under the news agency's editorial policy, its billionaire owner, Michael Bloomberg, is not considered for the index. Forbes, though, estimates his net worth at $94.5 billion.)

- Bernard Arnault, chief executive of the luxury group LVMH: $189 billion
- Elon Musk, chief executive of SpaceX, Tesla and Twitter: $179 billion
- Jeff Bezos, founder and chief executive of Amazon: $139 billion
- Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft: $125 billion
- Larry Ellison, co-founder and executive chairman of Oracle: $116 billion
- Steve Ballmer, investor and former chief executive of Microsoft: $113 billion
- Larry Page, co-founder of Google: $112 billion
- Warren Buffett, investor: $111 billion
- Sergey Brin, co-founder of Google: $106 billion
- Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder and chief executive of Facebook: $92.3 billion
- Carlos Slim, investor: $90.3 billion
- Françoise Bettencourt Meyers, heir to the L'Oréal fortune and company board member: $87.2 billion
- Mukesh Ambani, chairman of the energy group Reliance Industries: $83.7 billion
- Amancio Ortega, founder of the Inditex fashion group: $67.1 billion
- Jim Walton, heir to the Walmart fortune: $66.6 billion
- Rob Walton, heir to the Walmart fortune: $64.9 billion
- Alice Walton, heir to the Walmart fortune: $63.8 billion
- Gautam Adani, founder and chairman of the Adani Group conglomerate: $63.4 billion
- Jacqueline Mars, heir to and co-owner of the candy maker Mars: $61.7 billion
- John Mars, heir to and chairman of Mars: $61.7 billion
- Zhong Shanshan, founder and chairman of the bottled-water company Nongfu Spring: $61.6 billion
- Julia Flesher Koch and family, heirs of the businessman David Koch: $60.6 billion
- Charles Koch, chief executive of the industrial conglomerate Koch Industries: $60.4 billion
- Michael Dell, chief executive and chairman of Dell Technologies: $53.4 billion
- Alain Wertheimer, co-owner and chairman of Chanel: $45.9 billion
- Gérard Wertheimer, co-owner of Chanel: $45.9 billion
- Giovanni Ferrero, executive chairman of the chocolate and confectionery company Ferrero Group, and family: $43.6 billion
- Zhang Yiming, founder and chief executive of the technology company ByteDance: $42.3 billion
- Phil Knight, co-founder of Nike, and family: $41.5 billion
- Klaus-Michael Kühne, honorary chairman and majority owner of the transport company Kuehne+Nagel: $40.9 billion
- François Pinault, founder of the luxury group Kering: $39.6 billion

SUSAN WALSH/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stewart Rhodes, the leader of the Oath Keepers militia, was sentenced to 18 years in prison for his role in the Jan. 6 attack.

JASON ANDREW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Among the more than 1,000 criminal cases stemming from the Jan. 6 attack, there have been three separate trials for sedition.

NEWS ANALYSIS

A Sedition Conviction Provides Accountability

From Page A1

against communists, Islamic terrorists and white nationalists. Some of the cases have succeeded. But given that the statute requires prosecutors to prove an agreement to use violent force to oppose the laws or authority of the government — a difficult hurdle — many of the cases have failed.

The Jan. 6 sedition trials have all taken place just a brief walk from where the attack itself occurred — in the federal courthouse that sits only a few blocks down Constitution Avenue from the Capitol.

Scholars of political violence have widely viewed the proceedings as a major effort by the Justice Department to respond to the assault with significant indictments and to go as far as the law will allow in holding the feet of extremists to the fire and in defending the foundations of the democratic system.

There have been three separate Jan. 6 sedition trials so far, which have led to a total of 10 sedition convictions and four sedition acquittals. Four more people have pleaded guilty to sedition and avoided going to trial. All of these defendants were members of either Mr. Rhodes's organization, the Oath Keepers, or the Proud Boys, another prominent far-right group.

But even the flurry of sedition convictions has done little to stem the larger tide of far-right radicalism. Just this month, a Texas man in thrall to Nazi ideology fatally shot eight people at an outlet mall outside of Dallas. In late April, as one of the sedition trials went to the jury, a neo-Nazi group flying a swastika flag protested a drag show in Columbus, Ohio.

At the same time, the two main Republican presidential contenders — Mr. Trump and Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida — have both suggested that they might issue pardons to many of those convicted of taking part in the events of Jan. 6. As Mr. Rhodes himself said at his sentencing hearing, the Capitol riot defendants are increasingly viewed by many people on the right not as violent criminals, but as "patriots" and "political prisoners."

On Friday, two Oath Keepers who were on trial with Mr. Rhodes, Jessica Watkins and Kenneth Harrelson, were given prison sentences of eight and a half years and four years, respectively — though on charges of obstructing the certification of the election, rather than sedition. Four members of the Proud Boys convicted of sedition — including their former leader, Enrique Tarrio — are scheduled to be sentenced in August with a fifth member of the group who was found guilty of lesser conspiracy counts.

During all of the trials — two that involved the Oath Keepers and one that focused on the Proud Boys — defense lawyers repeatedly claimed that prosecutors proved their case only by expanding, or even by distorting, the traditional understanding of conspiracy law.

As others go to prison, the legal bearing on Trump is still unanswered.

The government, the lawyers pointed out, was never able to find a smoking gun indicating that either group had formed a clear plan or reached an explicit agreement to use force to stop the lawful transfer of power on Jan. 6. And that was despite having collected hundreds of thousands of internal text messages and turning several members of the groups into cooperating witnesses.

The lawyers also argued that the defendants who went to trial were not all that violent on Jan. 6, especially compared with other rioters. Mr. Tarrio, for instance, was 50 miles away from Washington in a Baltimore hotel room at time of the attack.

In response, prosecutors argued that all of the defendants had ties to comrades who did commit violence at the Capitol or had stashed an arsenal of weapons at the ready in Virginia. They also claimed that criminal conspiracies are rarely hatched in the light of day and that the agreements by the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys to disrupt the democratic process were reached implicitly and in an unspoken manner.

"It can be a mutual understanding reached with a wink and a nod," Conor Mulroe, a prosecutor at the Proud Boys trial, told the jury during closing arguments.

The fact that judges and juries in Washington have appeared to accept this expansive definition of conspiracy has given the Justice Department prominent victories in prosecuting the rioters who were on the ground on Jan. 6.

But the prosecutions have done little to resolve a different question: What legal responsibility does Mr. Trump bear for an attack intended to keep him in office despite his loss at the polls?

That issue is the focus of an investigation by Jack Smith, the special counsel appointed by Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. It is not clear what charges, if any, Mr. Smith might bring against the former president in the Jan. 6 investigation, but the outcome of the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys prosecutions has led some lawyers and legal experts to wonder if a similar approach might be used in building a sedition case against Mr. Trump.

If all it takes is a wink or a nod, the theory goes, to join conspirators in a plot to violently oppose the government's authority, then could it be possible to construct a seditious conspiracy connecting Mr. Trump to the mob that stormed the Capitol through his incendiary speeches and tweets?

More than a year ago, Judge Mehta himself issued a ruling in three civil lawsuits that sought to hold Mr. Trump accountable for the violence of the Capitol attack, suggesting there was evidence that the former president had in fact entered into a conspiracy with the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys on Jan. 6.

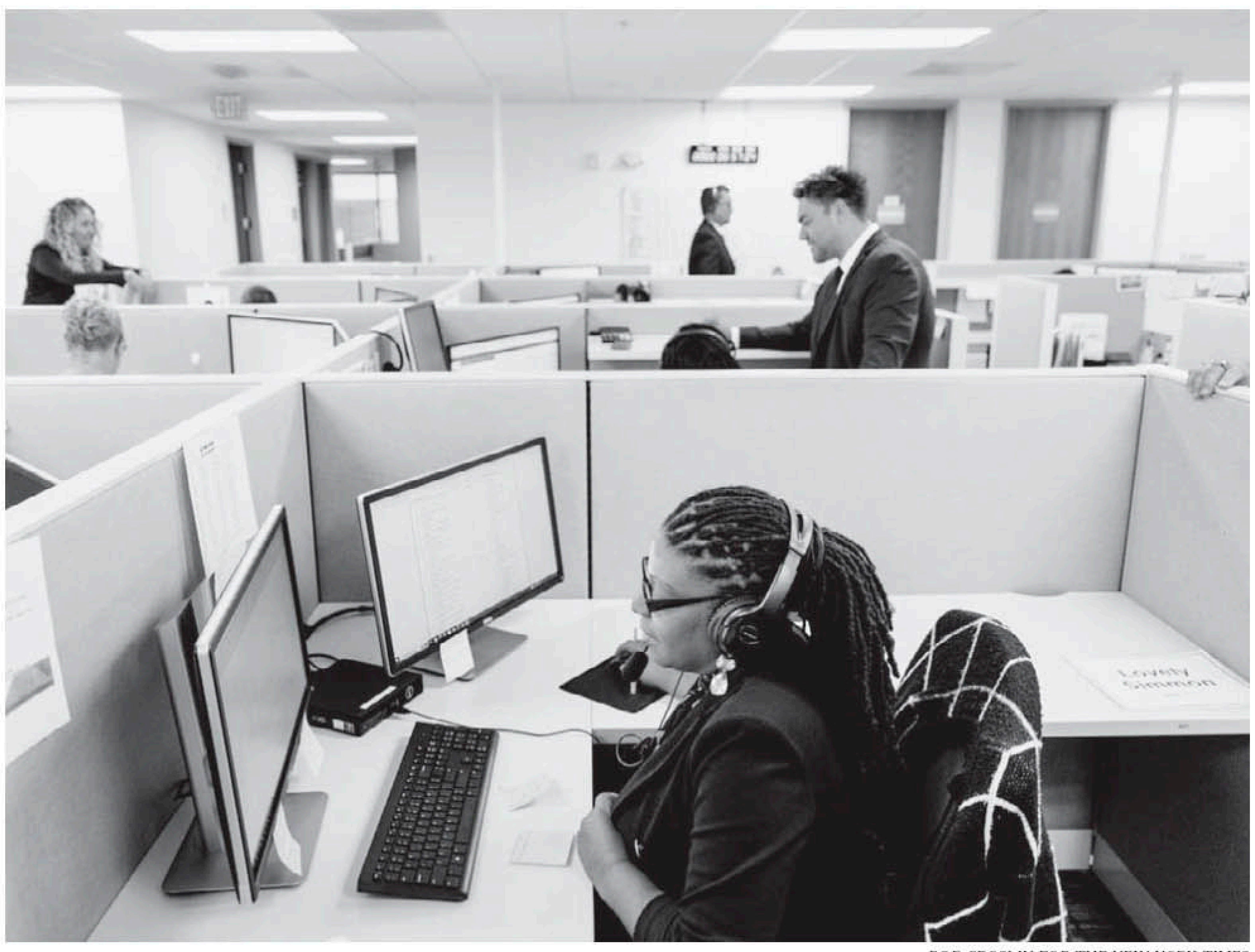
More important, Judge Mehta also said that it was plausible that Mr. Trump — largely on the basis of his words alone — had aided and abetted the ordinary rioters who threatened or assaulted police officers that day.

But Alan Rozenshtein, a former Justice Department official who now teaches at the University of Minnesota Law School and has written extensively about sedition, cautioned that it could be difficult to use the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys cases as any kind of precedent to build a sedition case against Mr. Trump.

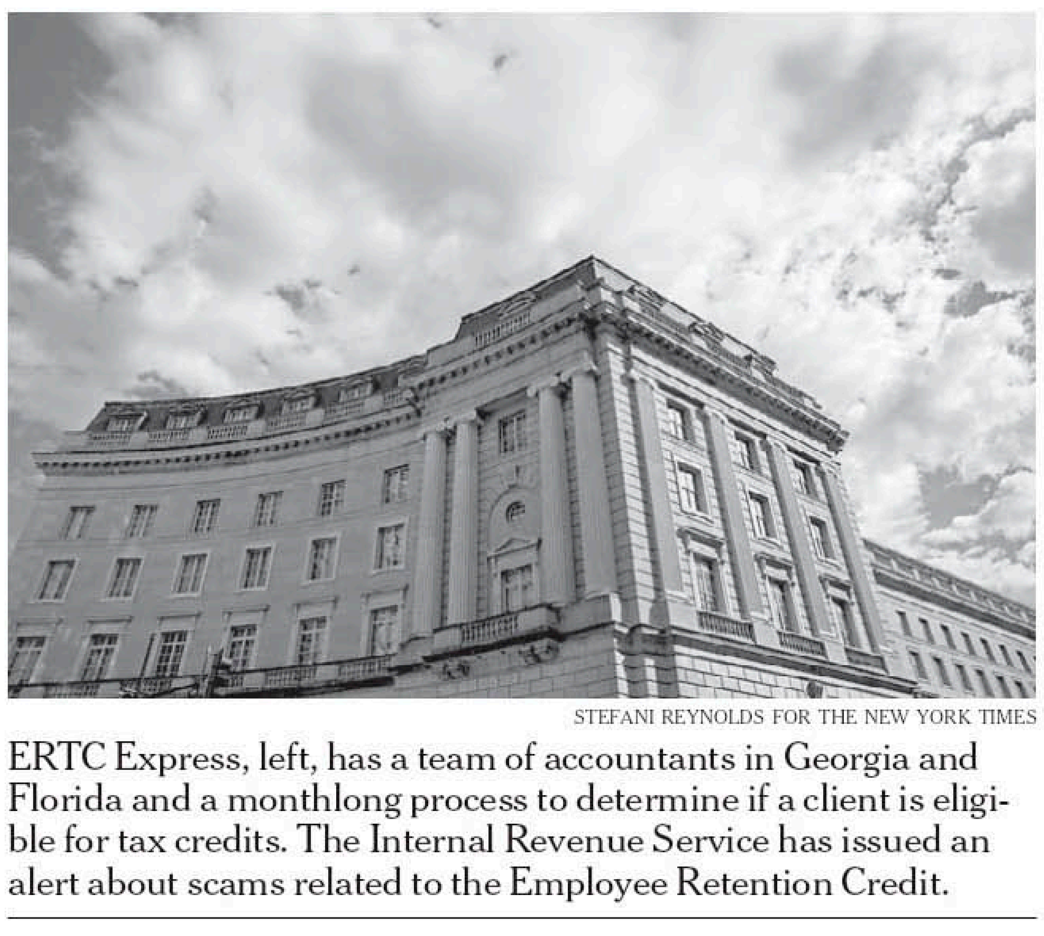
"Trump is a unique defendant in a league by himself," Mr. Rozenshtein said. "He's also a chaos agent and pinning down his actions in a way that shows he did any sort of planning has always been the tricky part."

Zach Montague contributed reporting.

A Little-Known Pandemic-Era Tax Credit Has Inspired an Industry for Fraudsters



BOB CROSLIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



STEFANI REYNOLDS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ERTC Express, left, has a team of accountants in Georgia and Florida and a monthlong process to determine if a client is eligible for tax credits. The Internal Revenue Service has issued an alert about scams related to the Employee Retention Credit.

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would cost the federal government about $85 billion over a decade — up from an earlier estimate of $55 billion. Even that turned out to be an underestimation: The I.R.S. said it had already paid out $152 billion in refunds associated with the tax credit and had a backlog of about 800,000 applications that it was trying to process.

The I.R.S. does not yet know how many of the approved refunds were based on fraudulent applications. But it has begun ramping up efforts to root out scams and focusing additional scrutiny on filings from firms that appear suspicious.

On Thursday, the I.R.S. issued a warning to businesses to be on the lookout for "scams" related to the tax credit, saying it was fueling a flood of "invalid" applications.

"These are Johnny-come-latelies, showing up and they're pushing this product, pushing this activity in a way that is unethical," Douglas O'Donnell, the deputy commissioner of services and enforcement at the I.R.S., said in an interview. "It is drawing businesses into a trap, that they will then be claiming a credit that they are not entitled to."

Mr. O'Donnell warned that those who received refunds but were ineligible for the money would have to repay the funds with penalties. He said the I.R.S. was aggressively auditing taxpayers who collected the refunds and the firms that processed them. He estimated that hundreds and possibly thousands of tax credit "mills" had popped up across the country in the last three years.

"They seem to be everywhere," Mr. O'Donnell said.

The tax credits are less well known than the more popular Paycheck Protection Program, which provided forgivable loans to cover payroll, rent and utility expenses during the pandemic. But for eligible taxpayers, they have the potential to provide a substantial windfall in the form of a tax refund. Businesses, including nonprofit organizations and churches, can seek up to $26,000 for each employee on the payroll if they can show that their operations were fully or partly suspended in 2020 or part of 2021, and report a significant decline in their revenues during that time.

However, the fine print that determines if a business is eligible is complicated, and the I.R.S. is concerned that firms that are processing applications for the credit at high volume are overlooking important restrictions in order to rake in bigger refunds and commissions.

For instance, the I.R.S. is concerned about taxpayers dipping into multiple pots of relief money and says many tax preparation firms are not telling clients that they cannot claim the tax credit on wages if they also received money to cover payroll costs through the Paycheck Protection Program.

The ballooning cost of the program is exacerbating America's precarious fiscal situation. The White House and Republican lawmakers are locked in a bitter fight over raising the debt ceiling, which caps how much money the United States can borrow. The Treasury Department has estimated that the government could run out of cash on June 5 and has resorted to accounting maneuvers so that it can keep paying its bills.

Treasury officials last month pointed to the Employee Retention Credit payouts as a reason that federal tax revenues are more meager than expected.

Lawmakers have been debating clawing back some unused pandemic relief funds as part of the debt limit and budget negotiations, but the tax credit does not appear to be part of those discussions. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Democrat of New York, sent the I.R.S. a letter this month urging it to clear its backlog and issue refunds faster.

More applications for tax credits are coming in every day as firms continue to blitz social media sites and TV and radio stations with ads touting the ease of getting federal money. In some cases, the firms are cold-calling potential customers.

Creating a cottage industry of firms that claim to help clients reap huge refunds.

Since October, about 9,000 advertisements promoting application services for employee retention tax credits have been airing on national cable and broadcast television networks, according to Vivvix CMAG, an ad tracking firm.

About three-quarters of those were sponsored by one of the biggest players in the industry, Innovation Refunds, which advertises on networks such as CNBC and claims that it takes just eight minutes for the firm to determine if an applicant is eligible. The firm says it has helped businesses claim over $1 billion in payroll tax refunds.

"That easy," a narrator says in one of the ads. "But it's only available for a limited time."

Innovation Refunds, which takes a 25 percent cut of whatever refund a customer receives from the I.R.S., uses a network of tax attorneys to review the applications and process the forms. It received financing from the investment firm Raistone to expand its ability to advertise and process more amended tax returns.

"If you don't have the knowledge, then you're not going to seek this out," said Mireille Rosselli, a spokeswoman for Innovation Refunds. "We're on a shot clock."

Ms. Rosselli added that Innovation Refunds had a rigorous system of vetting applications: "Our process is designed to deliver what Congress has intended to do — ensure that only eligible businesses apply for and receive government incentives and credits."

Firms providing employee retention tax credit services use different models. Some do not have certified public accountants on staff and rely instead on lawyers, offshore workers or software to crunch the numbers. Others rely on customers to "attest" that they are eligible for the tax credits, leaving those customers more liable in the event of an audit.

Brian Anderson, who has a background in software, cofounded ERTC Express in 2021 after learning that traditional accountants did not seem to have the time to help their clients go through the cumbersome process of applying for the credits. His business, which has offices in Atlanta and Tampa, Fla., has a team of in-house accountants and a more rigorous monthlong process to determine if a client is eligible to apply. Customers can pay either an upfront fee or a percentage of their refund.

"It's complex to figure out the answer to the question of are you eligible," Mr. Anderson said, estimating that a third of his potential clients do not qualify. "If you're not eligible, it's a lot of work for nothing."

The I.R.S. acknowledges that applying for the tax credit is a complicated process, made more difficult by the fact it must be done by amending previous tax returns using paper forms. The agency cautions that firms that say the process can be accomplished quickly and easily are likely misleading their customers.

Traditional accountants have been watching with concern as applications for the Employee Retention Credit have boomed. Many have since been hired to help taxpayers who suddenly find themselves under I.R.S. scrutiny.

"These guys are preying on people, promising the moon," said Mark C. Wagner, an accountant who is based near Dallas. "If your sales did not meet the criteria for the credit, then you have to pay the credit back, plus penalties, plus interest."

A lawyer for Mr. Bassett, who pleaded not guilty, said COS Accounting and Tax took seriously its responsibilities to comply with the I.R.S. requirements when applying for benefits for their clients. The lawyer, Kathryn Nester, explained that the regulations and guidance about the credit "were not often clear and were revised frequently."

That has provided little solace for clients of the business that have been looking for answers about their applications or left to contend with audits.

Wanchai Chab was working for a Utah-based company selling pest control supplies in California in 2020. Because he had set up a limited liability company, he was advised that he could apply for the Employee Retention Credit through COS Accounting and Tax. He paid $500 upfront and was told that he would get a credit of $3,500.

But instead of getting a big refund, Mr. Chab, 25, received an audit notice this year and ended up having to pay additional taxes.

Fortunately for Mr. Chab, the I.R.S. did not penalize him, because he never received the credit.

"The auditor said she understood what was going on and knew of lots of people who got ripped off like this," Mr. Chab said.

Menendez Investigation Is Said to Include Queries Regarding Luxury Gifts

By TRACEY TULLY and WILLIAM K. RASHBAUM

Federal prosecutors and the F.B.I. are investigating whether Senator Robert Menendez or his wife received unreported gifts of a luxury car and an apartment in Washington from a halal meat company that is also the focus of a criminal inquiry, two people with knowledge of the matter said on Thursday.

The investigation into Mr. Menendez, a Democrat who is the senior senator from New Jersey, is linked to a government search of the meat company's offices and the home of its president, according to a lawyer who met with prosecutors.

The search followed the Egyptian government's decision in 2019 to make the company, IS EG Halal of Edgewater, N.J., the sole authorized importer of halal meat into the country from anywhere in the world. The U.S. Department of Agriculture warned that the abrupt change could drive meat prices for Egypt's 90 million Muslims higher and disrupt the market.

Mr. Menendez, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, has said that he was willing to assist investigators and a spokesman has maintained that the senator is confident the inquiry "will be successfully closed."

"I am sure it is going to end up in absolutely nothing," Mr. Menendez said last week to NBC News.

A spokeswoman rejected assertions that the company offered perks.

NBC 4 New York was the first to report the investigation of unreported gifts. Federal officials declined to comment on Thursday evening.

In the 2019 search of IS EG Halal's office and the home of its president, Wael Hana, officials seized computers, cellphones and documents, according to court records. Mr. Hana, a Christian who emigrated to the United States from Egypt, has acknowledged in court papers that he had no prior experience certifying that meat was prepared according to Islamic law before he began operating his now global company in April 2019.

A spokeswoman for Mr. Hana denied on Thursday that he or the company had provided gifts to Mr. Menendez or his wife, Nadine Arslanian Menendez.

"IS EG Halal was awarded its halal certification contract with Egypt without any assistance whatsoever from Senator Menendez or any other U.S. public official," the spokeswoman, Ellen Davis, said in a statement.

Ms. Davis said allegations about gifts being provided "by anyone associated with IS EG Halal to Senator Menendez or his wife at all, let alone in exchange for any kind of favorable treatment, are totally without basis."

Until recently there had been few outward signs of movement in the federal investigation of Mr. Menendez since an initial blitz of subpoenas became public in October. And Mr. Menendez, 69, has continued to raise funds for his expected run next year for a fourth term in the Senate. The investigation is being conducted by federal prosecutors in Manhattan and the New York F.B.I. office.

Two weeks ago, as part of the same investigation, the Manhattan prosecutors subpoenaed documents tied to a bill that has stalled in the New Jersey Legislature that would limit the height of construction projects near the Palisades along the Hudson River. The subpoena asked for any correspondence about the bill from Mr. Menendez, Ms. Menendez or Fred Daibes, one of the region's most prominent developers, according to a person familiar with its contents who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the document publicly.

Mr. Daibes pleaded guilty last year to a federal banking crime as part of a negotiated agreement. The arrangement requires no prison time, and his sentencing has been delayed, fueling speculation that he was cooperating with the Menendez investigation.

On Thursday, one of Mr. Daibes's lawyers, Timothy M. Donohue, said that he had no comment regarding the status of the investigation in the Southern District of New York.

"But I can confirm that Mr. Daibes is absolutely not a cooperating witness in that matter or any other matter," Mr. Donohue said in an email.

Mr. Menendez and his wife were married in October 2020 in a small ceremony in Queens.

Even before their engagement, the couple had begun traveling together extensively. They received wedding gifts from a who's who of New Jersey leaders, according to a disclosure report Mr. Menendez filed in May 2021, as is required of federal officials.

In March 2022, Mr. Menendez amended that report to add an asset belonging to his wife: gold bullion bars worth between $100,001 and $250,000.

The senator's disclosure reports do not include any mention of a Mercedes or an apartment. Mr. Menendez's Senate spokeswoman, Jennifer Morrill, said that stories that rely on unnamed sources create a "suggestion of impropriety without any facts."

She did not directly address the claims that the federal inquiry had expanded to include questions about a Mercedes and a Washington apartment. But she said in an email that relying on unnamed sources for such "extreme and damaging claims" was irresponsible, adding that "any such reporting should require legitimate and named sources, or there should be concern about laws being broken."

Ms. Menendez, who holds a master's degree in French from New York University, has worked for Fusion Diagnostics, a medical testing facility in New Jersey. She also started a consulting company, Strategic International Business Consultants, in June 2019, according to the disclosure reports and New Jersey business incorporation records.

Ms. Morrill did not address questions about the gold bullion.

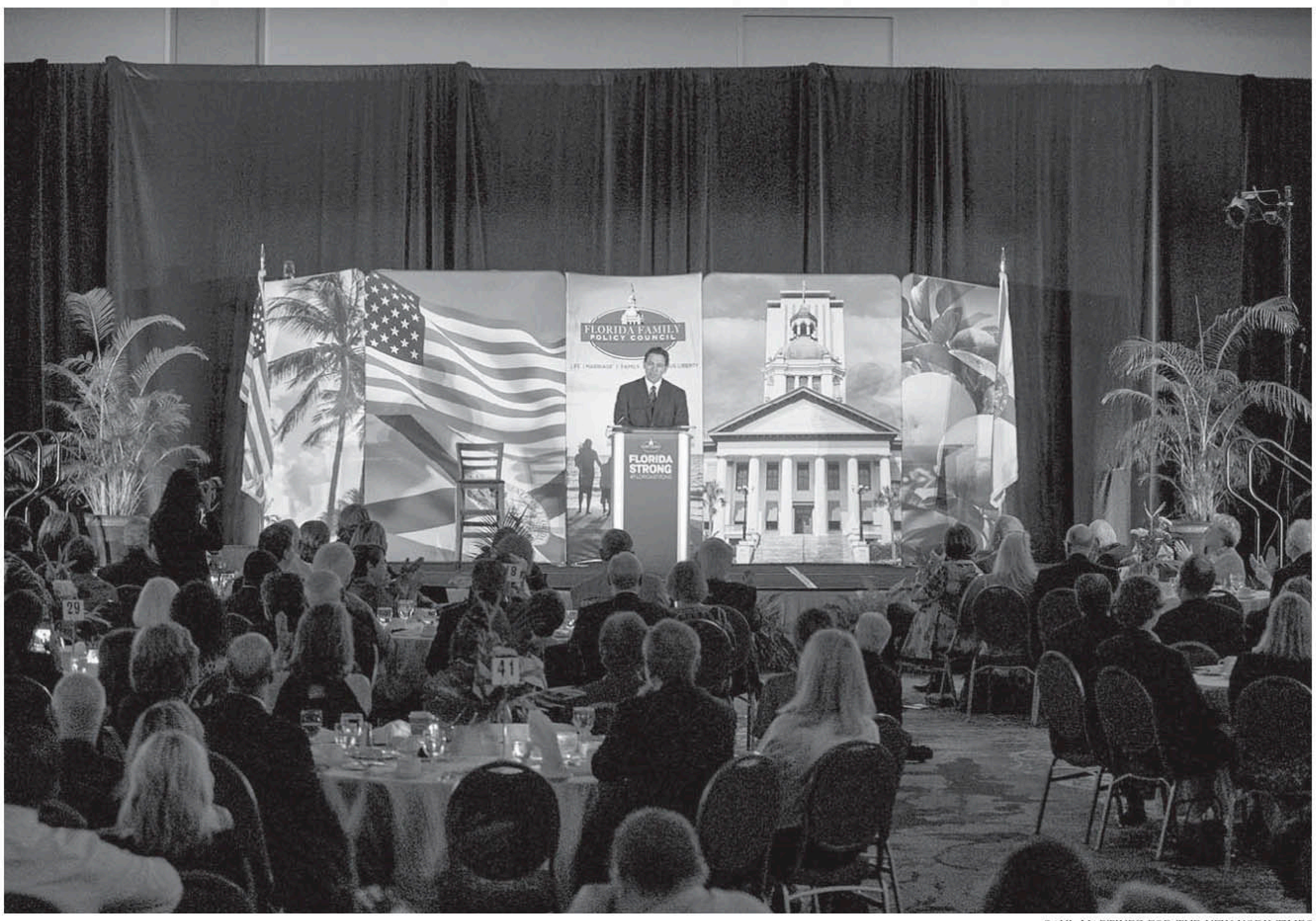
Peter P. Paradis, who retired in January from his post as deputy assistant inspector general for investigations at the U.S.D.A.'s Office of Inspector General, said that it was crucial that questions be asked about the halal company's sudden control of the worldwide flow of halal meat into Egypt.

"If you had a company that now has a global monopoly on anything, then that should be a concern that people should at least ask questions about," Mr. Paradis said in an interview.

"And I believe that answers should be given."

PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey is being investigated by the F.B.I. over unreported gifts from a halal meat company.



SAUL MARTINEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Gov. Ron DeSantis's presidential campaign raised $8.2 million in its first official day, some of which came from Florida lobbyists.

Raising Scrutiny in Soliciting Donations

*This article is by **Nicholas Nehamas**, **Alexandra Berzon** and **Jonathan Swan**.*

As Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida begins his presidential bid, officials in his administration have solicited donations from lobbyists and endorsements from lawmakers in the state, blurring the line between his taxpayer-funded office and his political campaign.

The outreach by the governor's office, which would normally fall to Mr. DeSantis's campaign staff, was described by two people who said they were approached by administration officials and who insisted on anonymity. In at least one case, a member of Mr. DeSantis's administration sent a text message to a lobbyist with a link to his presidential fund-raising platform.

NBC News first reported the solicitations to the lobbyists.

The people who were approached discussed the conversations only on the condition of anonymity, out of fear of reprisals by the governor's office, and insisted that the government officials not be named so as to avoid revealing their own identities.

Representatives for Mr. DeSantis's office and campaign did not respond to requests for comment.

Mr. DeSantis has yet to sign Florida's $117 billion budget, over which he retains a line-item veto — meaning he can, with the stroke of a pen, eliminate spending projects sought by lobbyists and legislators in Tallahassee, the capital, where he has exerted firm control over the Republican-controlled Legislature.

The outreach to lobbyists gave the impression that donations would be tracked by the governor's office, according to two people familiar with the matter.

In addition to the efforts to secure support from lobbyists, the main super PAC backing Mr. DeSantis's bid announced last week that 99 of Florida's 113 Republican state legislators had endorsed Mr. DeSantis for president. Several lawmakers said privately that they feared he might veto their bills or spending projects if they did not support him. Two said they had been contacted by members of the governor's administration about making endorsements.

As governor, Mr. DeSantis has sought to expand the power of his office and has relied on the specter of political retribution, bending legislators to do his bidding or else face primary challenges and targeting corporations like Disney that he has clashed with.

The unusual outreach to lobbyists and lawmakers highlights the careful line that Mr. DeSantis and his allies must walk as he seeks the nation's highest post while governing its third largest state.

Under Florida law, state employees are generally allowed to participate in political campaigns if they do so during their personal time, with their personal devices and without making reference to their official duties or authority, among other factors.

Ethics experts said the accounts of DeSantis administration officials' aiding his campaign merited further scrutiny — but the members of the Florida Commission on Ethics, which looks into allegations of ethical violations by government employees, are appointed by Mr. DeSantis and his allies in the Legislature.

"The conduct raises very serious and substantial questions," said Anthony V. Alfieri, founding director of the Center for Ethics and Public Service at the University of Miami School of Law.

A taxpayer-funded office has reached out to lobbyists and lawmakers.

Juan-Carlos Planas, a Florida elections lawyer, said the governor's executive staff and political team should maintain clear boundaries.

"Government is not supposed to be overtly political," Mr. Planas said. "People have to be able to deal with the government knowing that the campaign is a separate entity. When you start blurring the line, it becomes autocratic."

Mr. DeSantis has made urgent efforts to raise money for his campaign to take on former President Donald J. Trump, who boasts an army of small donors. On Thursday, Mr. DeSantis's campaign said it had raked in a record $8.2 million in the first official day of his run for the White House. The remarkable dollar amount helped quiet criticism of his glitch-filled campaign announcement on Twitter a day earlier.

At least some of the haul came from Florida lobbyists. Many of the lobbyists and their clients have projects within the state budget that Mr. DeSantis could choose to veto — giving them a clear incentive to contribute when asked. Several state lobbyists attended a daylong fund-raising session with Mr. DeSantis at the Four Seasons hotel in Miami on Thursday.

Aided by the event, which was called Ron-O-Rama, Mr. DeSantis raised roughly twice as much money as Mr. Trump did in the 24 hours after his criminal indictment this year. The sum broke the previous one-day record of $6.3 million set by Joseph R. Biden Jr. in 2019.

Mr. DeSantis is also under pressure to wrench key Republican endorsements away from Mr. Trump, who scored an early victory last month by securing the support of a majority of Florida Republicans in Congress.

Maggie Haberman and Patricia Mazzei contributed reporting.

Application Tool Will Hide Students' Race on Forms

From Page A1

the Supreme Court bans or restricts race-conscious admissions. The college opt-out could also put more pressure on applicants to signal their racial and ethnic background through other means, primarily in essays or teacher recommendations.

The scope of the court's decision, expected in late June, is unknown. But the justices showed a keen interest in the use of race boxes during the oral arguments last fall.

Colleges have said they will follow the law, but are wary of future litigation. Groups opposed to affirmative action have said that they may file lawsuits that could test the boundaries of the Supreme Court's ruling.

The potential case against race boxes is obvious, according to Edward Blum, founder of Students for Fair Admissions, the plaintiffs in the current court cases against Harvard and the University of North Carolina.

"If racial preferences are determined to be illegal, then it must follow that racial classification boxes should not be allowed on college application forms," he said.

Masking the race boxes on the Common App could give universities a measure of plausible deniability, legal experts said, and perhaps some protection from lawsuits.

Essays are a less likely target for lawsuits. As a practical matter, it would be hard to redact mentions of race from the many thousands of application essays that colleges receive every year, with more than 50,000 applicants at Harvard alone.

But more litigation around the broader issue of diversity, like scholarships for Black students, seems likely. "There is a colossal, well-organized, well-funded attack agenda," said Art Coleman, managing partner of Education Counsel, a consulting firm working with universities on the Supreme Court cases.

SHURAN HUANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Outside the Supreme Court last October. Universities are preparing for the possible end of race-conscious affirmative action.

During oral arguments, the Supreme Court justices spent considerable time discussing the race box and the application essay. Some variant of the phrase "checking the box" was used more than 30 times during the five hours of argument before the justices last October.

Patrick Strawbridge, a lawyer for Students for Fair Admissions, sparred with the justices over when it would be appropriate for admissions officers to know the race of an applicant. He suggested that much would depend on the context of the revelation.

Offering universities a measure of plausible deniability in the admissions process.

"What we object to is a consideration of race and race by itself," Mr. Strawbridge told the justices.

"Race in a box-checking way, as opposed to race in an experiential statement?" Justice Amy Coney Barrett, one of the conservative majority expected to be sympathetic to the plaintiffs, elaborated.

Mr. Strawbridge said it would be harder to object to a thoughtful essay that invoked the student's race in the context of a highly personal story.

An essay about overcoming racial discrimination could be permitted, because it "obviously indicates that the applicant has grit, that the applicant has overcome some hardship," Mr. Strawbridge told the justices. "It tells you something about the character and the experience of the applicant other than their skin color."

Isiaah Crawford, president of the University of Puget Sound, said he hoped the court would agree with Mr. Strawbridge on that point.

"We certainly do believe that student applicants should have a First Amendment right to be able to speak about their background if they choose to do so," Dr. Crawford said.

If discussion of a student's race were fully barred, he said, a white applicant to an Ivy League school might be able to write about being the child of an alumna, while a Black student might not be able to "to talk about his or her background, whose grandparents weren't let into schools like the Ivy League, and how that has impacted their choices."

The Common App will continue to collect racial information for its own purposes, like looking at trends in applications among different groups, regardless of how the Supreme Court decides, Ms. Rickard said. Because the nonprofit does not admit students, it is unlikely to be a target of litigation.

Colleges will be able to suppress racial information from both the printable and digital forms of applications. The Common App already allows colleges to hide information about test scores if they do not consider test scores in admissions. Colleges have also been able to hide students' Social Security numbers, birth dates, gender and criminal history.

Mr. Coleman said he hoped the court's focus during oral arguments on checking the box meant that it would rule against only the most simplistic and stereotypical use of race in admissions.

Otherwise, he said, trying to hide an applicant's race could become an exercise in absurdity. For instance, during an applicant's interview, "Are you supposed to go behind a curtain?"

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Opinion

The New York Times

More Immigrants Now Come to the U.S. the 'Right Way'

Dara Lind
A senior fellow at the American Immigration Council.

AMERICA now has an asylum lottery.

For all the attention paid to the United States-Mexico border in the days before and after the end this month of Title 42, which allowed federal officials to summarily expel unauthorized border crossers without letting them ask for asylum, few people (on the U.S. side, at least) seemed to notice the lottery's creation. But it's here.

The lottery system might sound a bit shocking: Surely there are fairer and more meritorious ways to determine who's allowed to set foot on U.S. soil and invoke her legal right to apply for humanitarian protection, right?

What's truly shocking, though, is that this *is* one of the fairer solutions available, given the mismatch between the number of people wishing to claim asylum for the past several years and the government's capacity to receive them.

The U.S. government tells people, time and again, to come the "right way." Thousands of people just over the border are listening: They surprised observers by not crossing in record numbers in the hours after the Title 42 order expired. The Biden administration has taken steps to help them comply, but neither this administration nor its predecessors have taken the prospect of expanding access to asylum at ports of entry — official border crossings — as seriously as the temptation to restrict asylum outside them.

The administration and Congress need to correct that imbalance. If access to asylum is going to be assigned at random, the U.S. government had better make sure it's doing everything possible — especially expanding staffing and physical space at ports — to maximize the number of slots available. And it must work toward evaluating *everyone's* asylum claims on the merits.

The lottery doesn't determine who wins asylum; it chooses who's allowed to apply for it. Hundreds of slots a day are assigned to asylum seekers waiting on the Mexican side of the border who've signed up for the lottery using the CBP One app, run by Customs and Border Protection.

The federal government claims that slots are awarded based on an algorithm that gives more weight to those who have been trying for an appointment the longest — but there is also a large element of random selection. Those who are selected are given an appointment time 13 days in advance, at a port of entry. Those who aren't selected have to register the next day and try again.

Under a regulation finalized May 10 by the Department of Homeland Security, people who have preregistered for appointments at ports — in other words, those who use the lottery — are the only ones who are allowed to seek asylum without facing other process hurdles. Everyone else has to meet a far higher standard to be allowed to file a full asylum application and face an immigration judge.

CHRISTOPHER LEE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The new asylum lottery system is proving a success.

That includes both people who cross between ports of entry — committing the federal crime of unlawful entry — and people who present themselves at ports of entry to ask for asylum but lack an appointment. The latter are not committing any federal crime. But under the regulation, unless they can demonstrate that they were persistently unable to use the CBP One app — and not speaking one of the three languages currently offered by the app isn't enough to meet that standard — they are presumed ineligible for asylum. The only way for an adult, or family, to avoid that presumption entirely is the lottery.

As arbitrary as this is, people who work with asylum seekers on both sides of the border see it as less arbitrary than the first-come-first-served appointment system that was in place for the first few months of this year. That system led to a mad dash every 24 hours as people used everything from clicker apps to cartel-rented phones to grab one of the few hundred available slots.

The Biden administration has now both expanded the number of appointments available — about 1,000 per day, across the border — and instituted the lottery system, which gives people 23 hours to register and an additional 23 to confirm their booking if selected.

If those 1,000 appointments are filled every day, the lottery will represent the federal government's biggest commitment to date to processing asylum seekers without forcing them to break the law first.

If you assume that the share of asylum-seeking inadmissibles — people who arrive at a port of entry without valid papers — has remained constant over time, the Obama administration, at its peak, processed around 500 a day.

And under the Trump administration, even as people who entered between ports of entry were subject to ever-escalating penalties, an official policy of queue management limited the number of people who were given physical access to the port, thus preventing them from setting foot on U.S. soil and invoking their asylum rights (or, in some cases, physically pushing them off U.S. soil to prevent them from doing so).

But the increase is still inadequate in the face of the number of people trying to come. The desire to comply with U.S. law doesn't keep someone safe and fed in northern Mexico indefinitely, and as frustrations rose with the first-come-first-served system this spring, so did tensions in border towns.

Some immigration hawks see processing asylum seekers at ports as prelegalization, because they see asylum seekers without papers as "illegal" no matter how they come. But for anyone who says that people should simply seek asylum legally — or anyone concerned with Border Patrol agents' being diverted from anti-trafficking operations to do immigration-court paperwork — there's a clear common-sense distinction between presenting oneself at an official border crossing, to be fingerprinted and checked as any other traveler entering the United States, and entering without detection.

Increasing port capacity is a genuinely thorny problem. Customs and Border Protection officers have to screen both vehicles and people to identify illegal smuggling, customs issues and immigration violations, and they have to do it efficiently enough that the $1.8 billion-a-day U.S.-Mexico cross-border trade isn't disrupted. It takes people, and it takes physical space. Both cost money.

The Biden administration's increase in appointments indicates that it has built up capacity to some extent. A proposal from Senator Dick Durbin to fund border infrastructure, which includes $51 million to hire permanent staff members at ports of entry, would help.

But imagine a world in which the thousands of military and civilian personnel who were mustered to the border in anticipation of a surge of illegal crossings — a surge that didn't materialize — were instead mobilized to meet the people who we already know are waiting for their chance to follow the law.

The Lies Mothers Tell Their Children and Themselves

Elise Loehnen
The author of the forthcoming book "On Our Best Behavior" and the host of the podcast "Pulling the Thread."

I LEARNED I wasn't wanted during a party game.

One Christmas, home from college, I went with my parents to a holiday gathering of families. After dinner, we played a game in which husbands answered frank questions on behalf of their wives.

When my parents' turn came, the host asked my father, "How many children did you want when you got married?" My dad, ventriloquizing my mother, snapped: "Zero. Definitely zero." She nodded along, unfazed, as everyone in the room laughed uneasily.

The blunt response rattled me, though it didn't surprise me or anyone else in the room. Low-grade frustration and resentment, paired with unwavering, tight-lipped competence: She would mother us by accomplishing the checklist mandated by the job, which involved subjugating what she wanted to our needs. But this didn't mean she would love it.

Before you think my mother must be a monster, she's not — besides being shockingly honest, she's curious and brilliant, with a laugh that's loud and melodic and inspires others to laughter. And she loved my older brother and me, even as she refused to take a knee at the altar of motherhood.

Perhaps her parenting style would have been different if she had been mothered herself, but she felt the sharpness and pain of not being wanted by her mom — in fact, of being actively disliked. As the oldest of seven in a poor household in Iowa, my mom looked after her siblings, a parentified child who lived with a scarcity of both food and opportunity. My grandmother was largely uninterested in her kids and often cruel to the girls specifically.

My mother went to a nursing school, met my doctor dad at the Mayo Clinic and signed up for his dream: an upper-middle-class life out West with horses and kids. Sure, she didn't want children or large animals, but it was a safe choice, one she could manage.

Unlike her mother, my mom didn't shirk the practicalities of the job. She read all the parenting theories, pursued all the extracurriculars for both my brother and me and picked the right schools for us to attend. She ran our existence like air traffic control, and she made all that labor invisible. She was good at it, but it was just not who she wanted to be.

As an adult, I understand and respect this; but as a child, I wanted the mommy-and-me outfits, stuffed-animal tea parties and mani-pedi dates as a manifestation of her bliss in the role. I wanted her to be like other moms, who at least had the good sense to perform their devotion to their children, ritually and publicly.

My brother and I attended boarding school for high school, an unexpected turn for two kids from Montana. My brother was desperate to go, and so I followed. Homesick, I remember asking my mom to send a care package.

"What's in a care package?" she asked.

"Oh, I don't know. You could send me brownies?"

"You want me to bake brownies and mail them across the country? Why don't I send you some money and you can go to the grocery store and buy some brownie mix?"

My mom mothered so as to keep up her side of the bargain, an agreement she made with my dad but never with me. Instead of giving me her delight in my presence, delight she couldn't fake, she would give me what she wanted for herself: opportunity. Untethered and unbridled opportunity.

I used to watch as she read Ms. magazine, sitting upright, at the dining room table. She came of age during second-wave feminism, when women kind of had a choice and kind of didn't. This made my mom's ambivalence about motherhood starker and more insistent: It's within the realm of possibility that my mom's life could have gone a different, more ambitious way.

As a child, I sensed her envy and her longing as she surveyed women who were "doing something" with their lives. She saw herself in these important women's faces. She rated her talent and intelligence as equivalent to theirs, if not higher, even as she was sidelined as support staff for the next generation.

It is tough to be your mother's jailer. My mom gave me everything, and for this, received nothing that she wanted in return. That is a heavy inheritance.

I tried to pay my mother for her sacrifice with good behavior, to make the destruction of her unrealized ambition worthwhile: I was a high-achieving child, winning awards, earning accolades, holding my own at adult dinner parties. I wanted to reflect my glory on her, to make the oblation of her talent worth it. I wanted to earn for her the title of "good mother" through what I accomplished, even as she insisted, with unvarnished honesty, that my achievements were my own and that it was not a title for which she much cared.

ILLUSTRATION BY SAM WHITNEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES; IMAGES BY GEORGE MARKS AND JIOJIO/GETTY IMAGES

You can love your kids deeply and still hate being a mom.

But I care. As Carl Jung famously said, nothing is more influential in a child's life than the unlived life of the parent. My mother's unlived life ricochets inside my life. My mom is an ardent reader — it's probably no coincidence that my brother is a book editor and I make my living with words. And like her, I have children — but I wanted mine.

In this anxious inheritance from my mother and my grandmother, I've both under- and overcorrected. Most of what I provide to my kids is nurturance, care and a soft lap before bed. I have excellent paid help to address many of their practical needs. I indulge them a lot. They participate in zero extracurriculars and do not have great table manners. I have no clue whether they'll go to college, much less a good one.

I devalued what my mother gave me — structure, scaffolding — to give my children what I didn't receive: the unrelenting insistence that they are wanted.

I once thought my desperation to prove and claim being a "good mother" was a hangover from a performative childhood. But as I've grown further into motherhood, weighing my own identity against my mom's, I recognize that her ambivalence is not only a familial trait but also a cultural one: I carry it, too.

You can love your kids deeply and hate being a mom. You can hold your children to the bone and still proclaim how sucky it is to be a female parent, in America at least, with our lack of paid family leave or high-quality day care and the cultural insistence that "good women" should stake their entire lives on the opportunity.

While my mother largely swallowed her resentment and observed the niceties, I am done being good. I am not only done but also furious that I feel so cleaved in two. This anger is a flame sparked by my grandmother and probably by her mother, too. My mother turned her anger into a steady kitchen fire, but in me, it roars.

I've built my emotional freedom on the pyre of my mom's honesty, on her willingness to give voice to resentment when so many women felt compelled to lie. Even though it was painful at times when I was a child, particularly because she was different from other moms (though, I insist, not that unusual), she did create a coherent narrative for me.

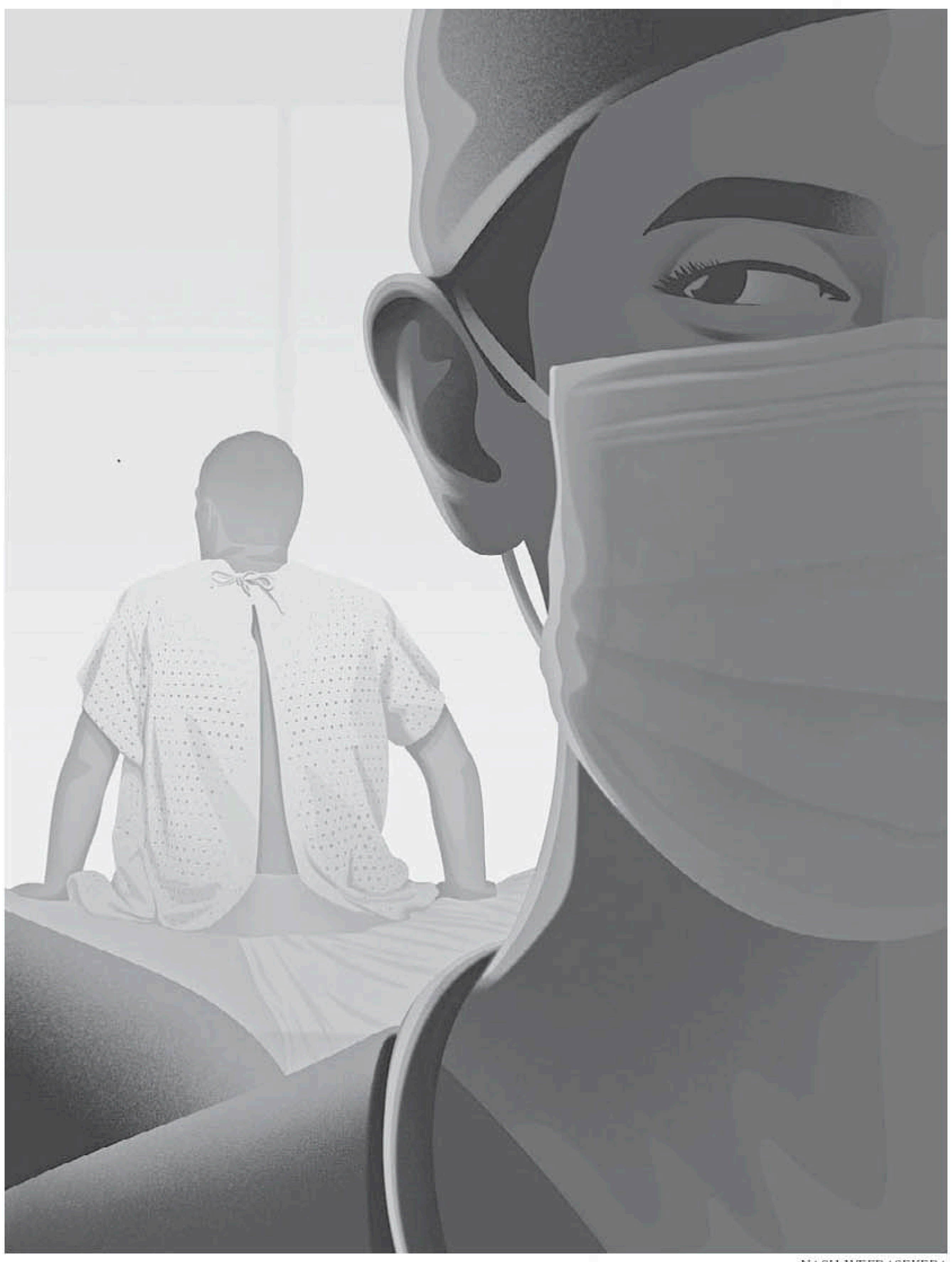
This narrative has proved to be less emotionally confusing than what some of my friends deal with; they can sense and yet not name their mothers' frustration and rage. They seek to resolve this angst through their own good behavior, not recognizing that they are the collateral damage of their mothers' anger but not its source.

It's not actually about them. The ambivalence comes from a societal expectation that you should love the identity of mother and love your kids. There are some women for whom these are easily conflated and conjoined, but for many, they are not.

Not Every Pandemic Needs Someone to Blame

Daniela J. Lamas

A contributing Opinion writer and pulmonary and critical-care physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.



NASH WEERASEKERA

THREE years ago, as I stood at the bedside of my first patient with the coronavirus, I struggled to understand why someone relatively young and healthy had become so sick. The unknown of the virus was frightening enough — to think that severe illness could strike at random was untenable. Even in my personal protective equipment, I held my breath, suddenly aware of my own vulnerability. The air itself felt dangerous.

A couple of months ago, my father called me to let me know that he had tested positive for the virus. I barely reacted — until I realized that a positive test meant that he would not travel to visit my infant as planned. He had been vaccinated and boosted, so I was not worried about his health, but I was frustrated. Quickly I felt my disappointment turn to judgment. He could have been more careful.

As I reflected on my reaction — and on the shift from the coronavirus as mortal threat to inconvenience — I found myself thinking not just about the early days of the pandemic in the intensive care unit, but also about how this virus has become intertwined with morality.

From the earliest reports, the public conversation has so often assigned blame for the spread of the coronavirus, based on ethnicity or underlying health conditions or political party. It is tempting to believe that health care workers are immune to such reactions. After all, we care for all patients, regardless of their culpability in their own illnesses. But looking forward to the inevitability of another pandemic, we must acknowledge that when faced with fear and uncertainty, those of us working at the bedsides are not entirely different.

Disease has long been weaponized against those who are perceived as "other." From the bubonic plague of the 14th century to tuberculosis and H.I.V., the examples echo throughout the history of medicine. When people are frightened, they seek someone to blame, to create a narrative — even if that narrative is false — in which disease is punishment rather than a random unlucky event.

Of course, health care workers often care for patients who are suffering, directly or indirectly, as a result of actions they have taken. We transplant organs for those with liver failure after cirrhosis after years of alcohol abuse, with heart failure after decades of poor diet and little exercise. So much of what we do in the hospital is about second chances, about care without judgment.

And yet the idea of culpability, whether our patients are blameless in their diseases, is still present. When we see patients with lung cancer, for instance, we discuss whether they have a history of smoking. The young mother with a lung mass who has never smoked represents a tragedy; an older man with cancer after 50 years of smoking elicits a different response.

That's not to say that the medicine we offer is different, not in any way that's measurable. But the distinction matters. It affects the way we frame the story, the way we understand the world.

Disease that can't be attributed to behavior is terrifying.

Disease that has no explanation in behavior is terrifying. It is a reminder that no matter what we do, no matter how careful we are, any of us could fall ill and die. It is a reminder that none of us are safe.

Which is one reason the coronavirus was so frightening to those of us in health care. The disease did not just break through the boundaries between doctor and patient, it decimated them. We were all vulnerable. And at first I thought that vulnerability might increase empathy, but then, as time went on, that empathy waned. And we, too, began to find an "us" and a "them."

It happened first with masks. Patients who did not wear masks were, in some ways, responsible for their own illness. We became even more frustrated, and more comfortable with openly discussing that frustration, when it came to patients who were not vaccinated. There were health care workers who railed against the idea of offering advanced and scarce resources like a lung bypass or transplantation to unvaccinated patients with life-threatening disease.

Even when there was no question of medical resources, the stigma of the unvaccinated was clearly present in the way we discussed a case. When we talked about patients on rounds, we mentioned in the first sentence if they had been vaccinated.

As in the case of the patient with lung cancer, this knowledge would not affect treatment, but it did change the way we framed the story. The people in front of us had made a choice, and they were sick and even dying as a result. They were not blameless, and so perhaps they were deserving of less of our sympathy.

This pandemic is waning, but there will be another one. I want to say that we will learn and we will be different, both at the bedside and out in the world. I want to say that we will give grace, that we know how assigning blame only tears us further apart, but then I look at history. I think about our perception of the unvaccinated. I think of the stigma that so many diseases bring with them, how little we want to acknowledge the role of luck and random chance.

And I have to wonder: When the next pandemic comes, whom will we blame?

Will 'Succession' Get Its Ending Right?

Theresa Rebeck

A playwright, television writer and novelist who created the TV show "Smash."

THE ending of "Succession" is upon us. So how to end this bitter masterpiece?

Do they shoot forward in time, stealing a page from the legendary finale of "Six Feet Under"? Maybe offer a glimpse of the future with that handsome sociopath and potential president they have put in power? Or just cut to black before someone assassinates Kendall? (I'm someone who actually liked the ending of "The Sopranos.")

Possible but not probable. None of those options feel quite right.

That's the thing about a good ending: It has to be both ineffable and organic. And unfortunately, a wrong-footed ending can virtually ruin an otherwise brilliant piece of art. The greatness of the astonishing "Game of Thrones" was severely undercut by too many missteps in its final episodes. Jaime goes back to Cersei and a house falls on them? The sublime and beloved Daenerys goes bonkers and burns down King's Landing? Bran gets the throne? What we want from an ending is a grand "amen," such as we got from "Breaking Bad." But "Game of Thrones" was more of a "huh?"

I've thought about endings a lot because I have to write them. While I usually have a vague idea of an ending when I start writing a play, I don't want everything set in stone. If you don't map the story out too ruthlessly, it will reveal itself to you in the writing — and there is often a secret subject, something both surprising and inevitable that your mind was holding on to, that ultimately presents itself. Something perfect, like an angel crashing through the ceiling. Or "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." Or the fact that there really is a cabal of devil worshipers living in the Dakota on the Upper West Side. Those are great endings.

The ending should grow out of everything that came before, but also be different from everything that came before. A great ending can be about transformation, in which our central character escapes, or finds true love, or discovers a profound truth and achieves inner wisdom (as in "Mad Men," except the profound truth was about Coca-Cola). Or it can be about justice, which rains down on those who deserve it and ruins those who don't. (See every superhero movie.) Or its opposite, the idea that justice has abandoned everyone. (See "The Godfather.") A good ending can involve a soft, mournful loss of hope. (See Chekhov.) It can celebrate the restored and renewed order that a marriage can provide to a disordered world. (See Shakespeare.) Or it can resolve with the notion that marriage is actually not going to solve anything. (Again, see Shakespeare.)

At its best, a sublimely written ending will raise everything that came before into the realm of timeless wisdom: "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past," as the narrator of "The Great Gatsby" concludes.

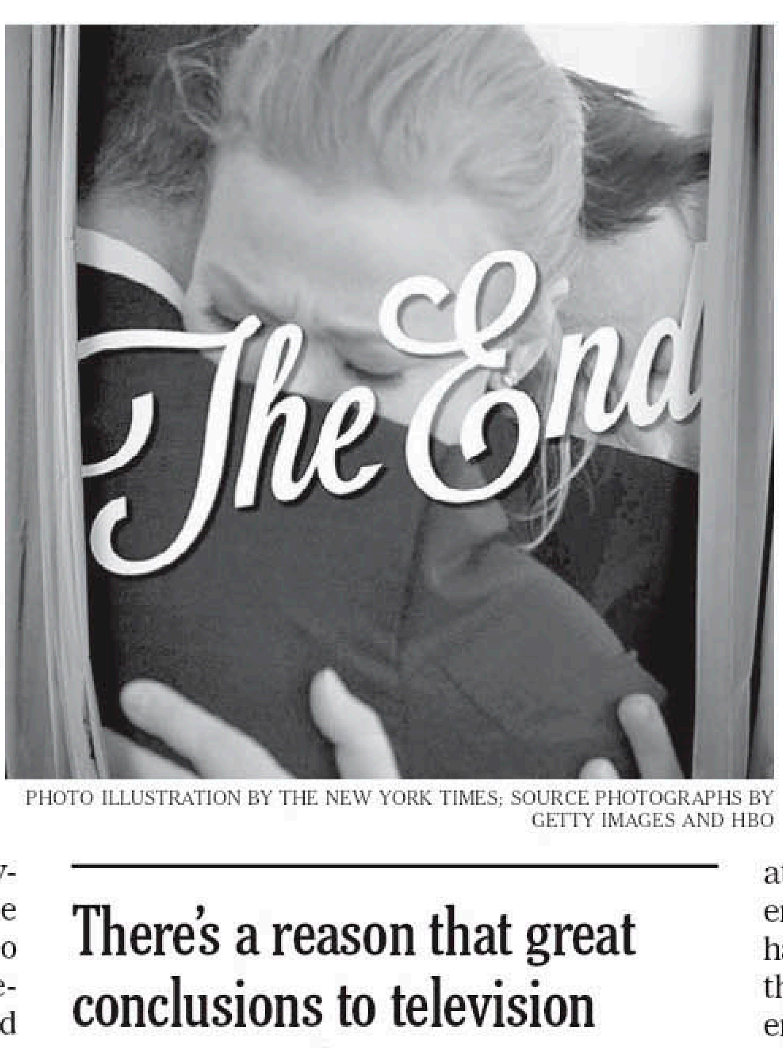


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY THE NEW YORK TIMES; SOURCE PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY IMAGES AND HBO

There's a reason that great conclusions to television series are elusive.

Television offers different challenges — and not just because the viewers will sit and stew for a week (or more) obsessing about how it all might end. Television is built differently from other kinds of drama, so naturally it ends differently, too.

You start with a pilot episode, which may or may not make it to air, and then you inchworm yourself through a first season. At that point the ending is so far off it's hard to take the idea of it seriously. After all, if no one watches, you'll just be canceled anyway. So you're not trying to imagine the ending — you're trying to avoid it.

That's why truly great endings are especially hard to come by in television. TV shows are not *about* the ending; they're about the middle. They're about how long you can keep that show on the air. When you have a hit, generally no one is in a big hurry to get to the ending, which is why phrases like "jump the shark" have entered the lexicon. The middle is where television thrives.

For me, the ending of Season 2 of "Succession," when Kendall betrayed his father, Logan, to the world and threatened to bring the whole house of cards down on everyone's head, was perhaps the series's most spectacular moment. That whisper of a smile from Logan as he watched the catastrophe was mysterious, glorious and human. Did he secretly want Kendall to grab the reins? Perhaps so. It was undeniably great television. Then Logan went ahead and destroyed Kendall all over again in Season 3. And the show went back to the starting gate. There's a kind of circularity in TV that's inherent in the form. This is why so many shows end in what can only be called "the group hug." "Mary Tyler Moore" did it; "The Office" did it; "Seinfeld" did an incarcerated version of it.

I suspect that we are not getting a group hug out of "Succession."

As endings go, "Succession" is a special case, and not just because the creator Jesse Armstrong chose not only how to end the show, but also when. (He's said it has "been kind of present" in his mind from the very beginning.) With "Succession," the ending has always been built right into the title.

My bold prediction? I can tell you what *won't* happen: Logan won't come back to life. The children won't sell the company to someone who shows up suddenly from China with a better offer. It won't turn on a deus ex machina that shows up because nobody knew how to land the damn plane so they just brought in something from nowhere and that's the end.

As for what *will* happen, I feel confident in promising this: The ending of "Succession" will fulfill the story and not betray the spirit of what has come before. Its creators have proved over four seasons that they're better than that.

That's why I'll be tuning in. I can't wait to see how it ends.

LETTERS

DeSantis's Entry Into the Republican Race

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Hot Mic, Dead Air and Eventually, DeSantis Speaks" (front page, May 25):

So Ron DeSantis finally entered the race. Among his highest priorities is a crusade against D.E.I. (diversity, equity and inclusion) and "woke" that we must all witness now.

I have three questions for Mr. DeSantis:

First: What is wrong with diversity? Ecosystems are more resilient if there is diversity. Likewise for human societies. And diverse societies are more fascinating. Color is interesting; monochrome is boring.

Second: What is wrong with equity? Don't all Americans believe in equality of opportunity and equality before the law? And we know that extreme inequality of income and wealth hurts the economy.

Third: What is wrong with inclusion? Which group do we propose to leave out? Don't all God's creatures have a place in the choir?

Bonus question: D.E.I. is what wokeness is all about. What is so bad about wokeness? Whom does it harm? Where is the angry mob? Why should "woke" go to Florida to die?

I put these questions to the governor.

MICHAEL P. BACON
WESTBROOK, MAINE

TO THE EDITOR:

While Twitter may have its share of weaknesses, Gov. Ron DeSantis has skillfully demonstrated his leadership qualities and strengths. Choosing facts over fear, education over indoctrination, law and order over rioting and disorder — Mr. DeSantis's record speaks for itself.

Because of his common sense and guidance, Florida is growing now more than ever as people are migrating and planting new roots in the Sunshine State. With Florida as the model, we need look no further than Ron DeSantis as our nation's future.

JOANN LEE FRANK
CLEARWATER, FLA.

Don't Debate Trump

TO THE EDITOR:

It is not too early to mention presidential debates. The Times should make an unprecedented recommendation that the sitting president *not* debate former President Donald Trump during the 2024 campaign.

One simply cannot debate an inveterate, incessant liar. I mean that in the most literal sense: Lying is not debating, and it takes two to engage in debate. It cannot be done.

Witness the recent CNN debacle, where, even when checked assiduously by the moderator, Mr. Trump repeated nothing but lies. Everyone who could have conceivably been convinced that the former president ignores the truth completely was already convinced. All others will never be convinced.

Therefore, there is no upside whatsoever to sharing the stage with such a mendacious bloviator. In fact, it may serve only as an opportunity for the former president to call for another round of "stand back and stand by." Should President Biden give him that opportunity?

DAVID NEUSCHULZ
CHATHAM, N.J.

Regulating A.I.

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "The Most Important Man in Tech (Right Now)" (Business, May 17): Warnings about the enormous dangers of artificial intelligence are warranted, but mere calls for "regulations" are empty. The question is not whether regulatory regimes are needed, but *how* to control the uses to which A.I. can be put.

Anything human or nonhuman that is capable of creative thought is also capable of creating mechanisms for self-preservation, for survival. The quest for a "precision regulation approach to A.I." is likely to prove elusive.

Norman Cousins, Carl Sagan, Alvin Toffler and many others have presciently warned that technological advances provided both a cure to some of humanity's afflictions and a curse, potentially threatening human existence.

One doomsday scenario would be for tech scientists to ask A.I. itself for methods to control its use and abuse, only to receive a chilling reply: "Nice try!"

CHARLES KEGLEY
COLUMBIA, S.C.

The writer is emeritus professor of international relations at the University of South Carolina.

Detransition Stories

TO THE EDITOR:

While "G.O.P. Focuses on Rare Stories of Trans Regret" (front page, May 17) rightly notes that the campaign to ban gender transition in minors is led by Republicans, it falls into the trap of viewing youth gender medicine and detransition as a right-versus-left issue. Many people who support equality for trans and detrans people insist that a public health lens is crucial.

The article doesn't mention the growing transnational archive of people who detransition, commonly with feelings of regret for having transitioned. If you look at countries with national universal health care systems like Sweden, youth gender care has recently evolved following state-funded reviews of transgender treatment. By contrast, in the U.S., our highly privatized and compartmentalized managed care system contributes to the politicization of this issue to the detriment of all.

Perhaps this is why the article seems to downplay the trauma that saturates detransitioners' testimonies. To mourn the loss of one's breasts or ability to reproduce is no small matter.

Journalists should stop equating detransition with an attack on transgender people. Instead, they should see young people testifying to medical harm as a call for accountability and strive to understand the full range of their experiences without fueling the dangerous right-left divide.

DANIELA VALDES
NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.

The writer is a doctoral candidate at Rutgers University who researches detransition.

'Best' Musings

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Our Endless, Absurd Quest to Get the Very Best," by Rachel Connolly (Opinion guest essay, May 21):

As far as I'm concerned, the best of anything is the one that meets my particular needs, not those of the reviewer, not those of the critic and not those of anybody else.

Likewise, what's best for me is not necessarily best for you. You could say that the "best" is not an absolute; it's relative.

JON LEONARD
SAN MARCOS, TEXAS

TO THE EDITOR:

While some may suffer from a relentless pursuit of perfection, some struggle with making choices, period. I've witnessed parents trying to get their toddlers to make choices about food, clothing, activities, etc. Hello, they're 2!

I wonder how many suffer from what I call "compulsive comparison" chaos, when one goes shopping after purchasing an item to make sure they got the best deal, even if satisfied with their purchase.

VICKY T. ROBINSON
WOODBRIDGE, VA.

Finances and Divorce

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Rebuilding Finances After Divorce" (Business, May 18):

Your article is correct in advising spouses that they may "land in financial hot water" unless they seek expert advice concerning splitting retirement assets at divorce. But getting good advice, while a necessity, is not enough.

Even if a spouse is awarded a share of a 401(k) or pension benefit as part of a divorce decree, that alone is not enough. Under the federal private pension law ERISA, spouses must obtain a special court order called a qualified domestic relations order (better known as a Q.D.R.O.) to get their rightful share of private retirement benefits.

This should be done earlier, not later. Getting a Q.D.R.O. after a divorce is much harder — and sometimes impossible — to get.

So, to protect themselves at divorce, the word "Q.D.R.O." should be part of every woman's vocabulary.

KAREN FRIEDMAN
WASHINGTON

The writer is the executive director of the Pension Rights Center.

The New York Times
Cooking

Make prep time
the new playtime.

Sugar Cookie Bars Avocado Fries Yogurt Cake Zucchini Pancakes Guacamole con Frutas Macaroni and Cheese Banana Everything Cookies Miso Meatballs

Explore curated collections like
Recipes to Cook With Your Kids.

nytcooking.com

3 ECONOMY
The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge climbed 4.4 percent in April, a slight increase from March.

4 YOUR MONEY ADVISER
Contributions to 529 college savings plans are rising once again, aided by a recovery in the stock market.

9 SPORTS
Fired up by Marcus Smart, the Boston Celtics are halfway to what would be an unprecedented comeback.

Business

The New York Times

YUKAI DU

A Vacation Survival Guide

After several recent travel meltdowns, airline executives said they were hiring staff and reducing flights. Page 5.

How can you be prepared for delays and cancellations? Choose early flights and know your rights. Page 6.

Gasoline prices have fallen by a full dollar per gallon since last May, easing driving costs for travelers. Page 6.

The Digest

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Ford and Tesla Strike Deal To Share Charge Stations

Ford Motor shares jumped more than 6 percent on Friday after the automaker announced a deal giving its electric-vehicle owners access to Tesla's charging stations in North America.

Tesla's Superchargers could become the standard for E.V. charging in the United States, Ford's chief executive, Jim Farley, told CNBC. But he added, "With adapters and software, we really don't have to make a choice right now what the standard is, but I think it's going to play out in the free market."

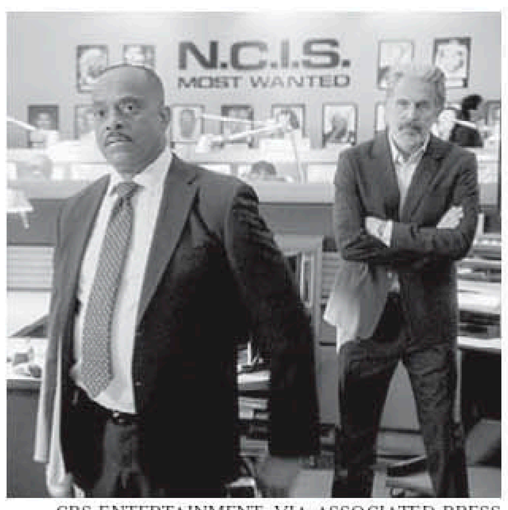
Tesla shares rose nearly 5 percent.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg praised the Ford-Tesla deal, but told CNBC that the Biden administration would not dictate an EV charging standard.

Mr. Farley added that General Motors and other automakers are going to "have a big choice to make" in selecting between Tesla's chargers and the Combined Charging System. *REUTERS*

TELEVISION

CBS Is the Most Watched For the 15th Straight Year



CBS ENTERTAINMENT, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

CBS claimed the distinction of most-watched television network for the 15th straight year, even as those bragging rights do not mean what they used to.

The network averaged just under six million viewers on a typical moment in prime time for the season that just concluded, the Nielsen company said on Friday. NBC was the second most popular, followed by Fox and ABC — the same pecking order as last year.

All of the networks lost viewers from the year before, with NBC's 13 percent decline the steepest and Fox's 1 percent drop the smallest, Nielsen said.

CBS's winning streak began in a different era, back when the mention of streaming or cord-cutting would have earned a quizzical look. Its viewership average during that 2008-09 season was 11.75 million, nearly double what it was this year.

In comparison, ABC and Fox both lost more than half their live viewers from that season, while NBC was down 33 percent, Nielsen said. *ASSOCIATED PRESS*

BANKS

JPMorgan Lays Off 15% Of First Republic Workers

About 1,000 employees of First Republic Bank are being let go about a month after it was seized by regulators and acquired by JPMorgan Chase.

The vast majority of First Republic employees, roughly 7,200 before it ran into trouble, were offered jobs by JPMorgan, meaning that about 15 percent of the bank's employees are being laid off.

When First Republic failed and was bought by JPMorgan on May 1, JPMorgan executives said that they planned to take 30 days to figure out new roles for the First Republic employees and that not every employee would be guaranteed a job.

First Republic cut roughly 25 percent of its work force before JPMorgan stepped in. Bank employees that are not being offered jobs at JPMorgan will get an additional 60 days of pay and benefits, the bank said. Additional payments to those being let go will be based on how long they worked at First Republic. *ASSOCIATED PRESS*

S&P 500 INDEX
+1.3%
4,205.45

DOW JONES INDUSTRIALS
+1.0%
33,093.34

NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX
+2.2%
12,975.69

10-YEAR TREASURY YIELD
3.80%
−0.007 points

CRUDE OIL (U.S.)
$72.67
+$0.84

GOLD (N.Y.)
$1,944.30
+$0.60

Rising Tech Shares Give Markets a Boost

By The Associated Press

Technology stocks powered solid gains for Wall Street on Friday after another chip-maker reported strong demand related to artificial intelligence.

The upbeat finish to the week for major indexes came amid lingering anxiety over persistently high inflation, the risk of a U.S. debt default and broadly weak corporate earnings.

STOCKS & BONDS

The S&P 500 Index

Position of the S&P 500 index at 1-minute intervals on Friday

-- Previous Close: 4,151.28

Source: FactSet THE NEW YORK TIMES

The S&P 500 rose, 54.17 points, or 1.3 percent, to close at 4,205.45. It notched a small gain for the week and is in the green as May nears its close.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 328.69 points, or 1 percent, to 33,093.34.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq notched the biggest gains, rising 277.59 points, or 2.2 percent, to 12,975.69. The index rose 2.5 percent for the week as artificial intelligence became a big focus for investors.

Marvell Technology surged a record-setting 32.4 percent after the chip maker said it expected A.I. revenue in fiscal 2024 to at least double from the prior year. That follows Thursday's report from fellow chip-maker Nvidia, which gave a big forecast for upcoming sales related to A.I.

The revolutionary A.I. field has become a hot issue. Critics warn that it is a potential bubble, but supporters say it could be the latest revolution to reshape the global economy. The nation's financial watchdog, the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, said it's working to ensure that companies follow the law when they're using A.I.

Wall Street remains focused on Washington and ongoing negotiations for a deal to lift the U.S. government's debt ceiling and avert a potentially calamitous default.

Officials said President Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy were narrowing in on a two-year budget deal that could open the door to lifting the nation's debt ceiling. The Democratic president and Republican speaker hope to strike a budget compromise this weekend.

Wall Street and the broader economy already had a full roster of concerns before the threat of the U.S. defaulting on its debt became sharply highlighted on the list.

"Should we avoid that, and it appears that is a high probability, we come back to a trajectory of a slowing economy, still-too-high inflation and restrictive monetary policy," said Bill Northey, senior investment director at U.S. Bank Wealth Management.

A key measure of inflation that is closely watched by the Federal Reserve ticked higher than economists expected in April.

The persistent pressure from inflation complicates the Fed's fight against high prices. The central bank has been aggressively raising interest rates since 2022, but recently signaled it will likely forgo a rate hike when it meets in mid-June. The latest government report on inflation is raising concerns about the Fed's next move.

Wall Street is now leaning slightly toward the potential for another quarter-point rate hike in June, according to CME's Fedwatch tool. The Fed has already raised its benchmark interest rate 10 times in a row.

The Fed faces a difficult choice at its next meeting, wrote Brian Rose, senior U.S. economist at UBS, in a report.

"Inflation is too high but further rate hikes could push the economy into recession," he said.

Bond yields had been slipping just before the latest inflation data, but rose following the report. The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans, rose to 3.80 percent from 3.78 percent just before the report was released.

Movement for the two-year Treasury yield, which tends to track expectations for Fed action, was more forceful. It jumped to 4.56 percent from 4.49 percent before the report.

The latest inflation data also highlighted the continued resilience of consumer spending, which has been a key bulwark, along with the strong jobs market, against a recession. The economy grew at a sluggish 1.3 percent annual rate from January through March and it is projected to accelerate to a 2 percent pace in the current April-June quarter.

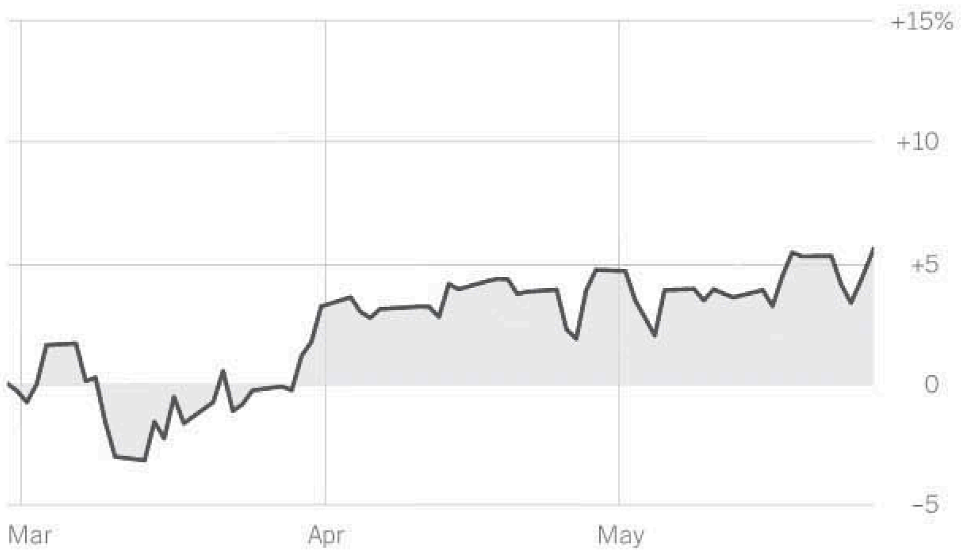
The impact from inflation and worries about a recession on the horizon have been hitting corporate profits and forecasts. The latest round of company earnings is nearing a close with the profits for companies in the S&P 500 contracting about 2 percent. That follows a previous quarterly contraction and Wall Street expects the current quarter to end with more shrinking profits.

Investors rewarded several companies that reported strong financial results. Gap rose 12.4 percent after reporting a strong first-quarter profit.

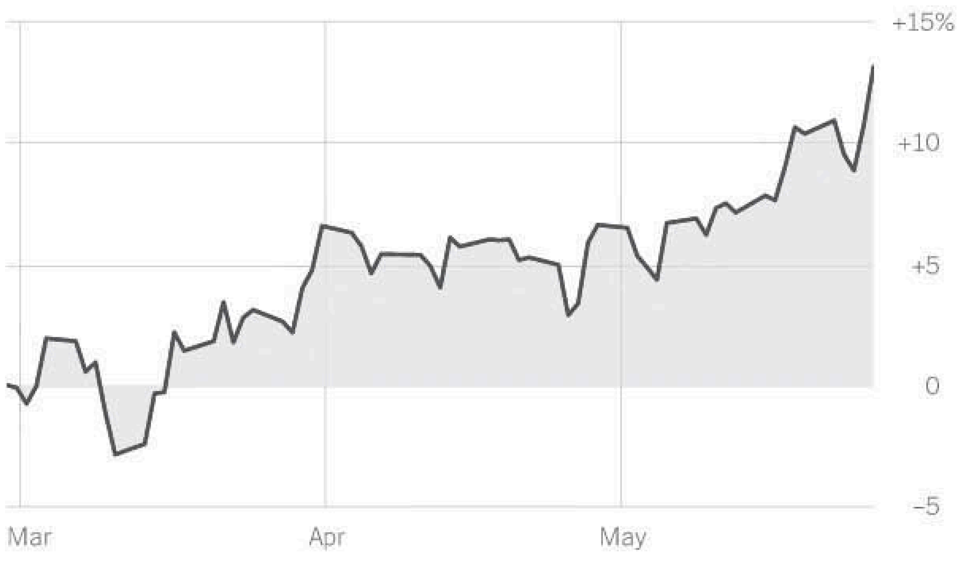
What Happened in Stock Markets Yesterday

POWERED BY FACTSET

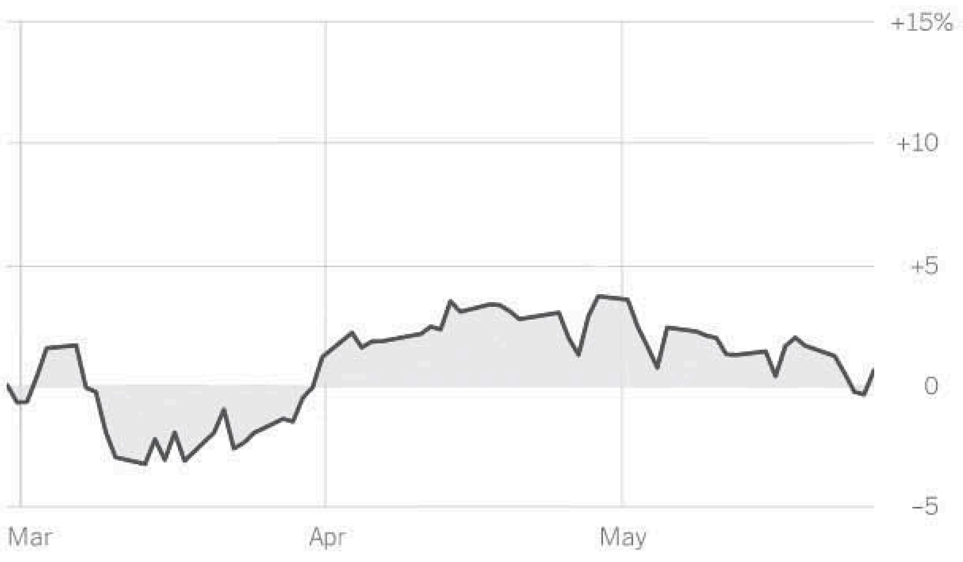
S&P 500 4,205.45 ↑+1.3%
3 month performance: **+5.6%**



Nasdaq Composite Index 12,975.69 ↑+2.2%
3 month performance: **+13.2%**



Dow Jones Industrials 33,093.34 ↑+1.0%
3 month performance: **+0.6%**



Best performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Broadcom (AVGO)	$812.73	+11.5%
2. Arista Networks (ANET)	$170.35	+9.1
3. Digital Realty Trust (DLR)	$98.89	+7.2
4. Monolithic Power Systems (MPWR)	$520.92	+6.7
5. Teradyne (TER)	$103.71	+6.6
6. Ford Motor (F)	$12.09	+6.2
7. Micron Technology (MU)	$73.93	+6.2
8. KLA Corp. (KLAC)	$461.19	+6.2
9. Qorvo Inc (QRVO)	$100.04	+6.1
10. Qualcomm (QCOM)	$110.35	+6.1

Worst performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Ulta Beauty (ULTA)	$420.27	−13.4%
2. Kroger (KR)	$47.31	−3.3
3. Eversource Energy (ES)	$68.69	−3.1
4. Everest Re Group (RE)	$350.06	−2.7
5. Medtronic (MDT)	$81.46	−2.5
6. Coterra Energy (CTRA)	$24.24	−2.4
7. Cardinal Health (CAH)	$82.83	−2.2
8. Arch Capital Group (ACGL)	$71.00	−1.9
9. C.H. Robinson Worldwide (CHRW)	$97.54	−1.9
10. McKesson (MCK)	$387.95	−1.9

Most active

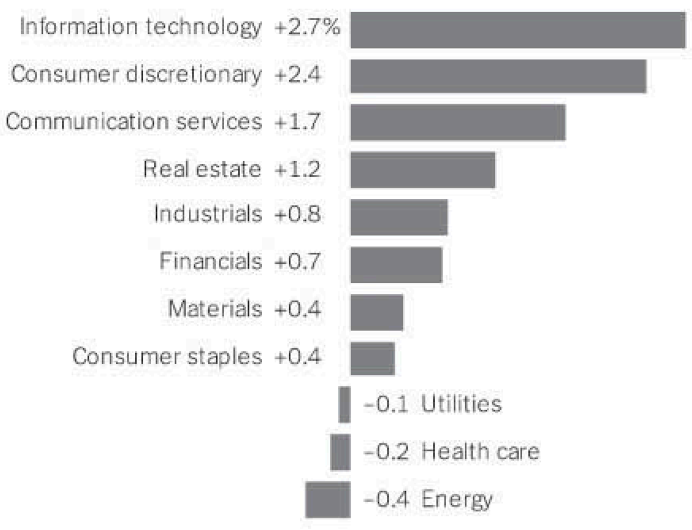
S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE	VOLUME IN MIL.
1. Tesla (TSLA)	$193.17	+4.7%	161
2. Ford Motor (F)	$12.09	+6.2	122
3. Amazon.com (AMZN)	$120.11	+4.4	94
4. Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)	$127.03	+5.6	92
5. Intel Corp (INTC)	$29.00	+5.8	72
6. NVIDIA (NVDA)	$389.46	+2.5	71
7. Bank of America (BAC)	$28.31	+0.5	58
8. Apple (AAPL)	$175.43	+1.4	55
9. AT&T Inc. (T)	$15.50	+2.3	49
10. Microsoft (MSFT)	$332.89	+2.1	36

Regional and emerging markets

	TOTAL RETURN 1 YR	TOTAL RETURN 5 YRS	TOTAL ASSETS IN BIL.
1. Vanguard Emerging Markets Stock Index Fund Investor Shares (VEIEX)	−4.5%	+0.1%	97.3
2. American Funds New World Fund Class A (NEWFX)	+2.8	+4.1	50.3
3. Invesco Developing Markets Fund Class Y (ODVYX)	+8.3	−0.3	25.6
4. DFA Emerging Markets Core Equity Portfolio Institutional Class (DFCEX)	−2.8	+0.8	24.3
5. Fidelity Series Emerging Markets Opportunities Fund (FEMSX)	−2.1	+0.6	22.7
6. GQG Partners Emerging Markets Equity Fund R6 Shares (GQGRX)	−2.0	+3.1	11.9
7. DFA Emerging Markets Value Portfolio Class R2 (DFEPX)	−2.0	+0.2	10.4
8. Strategic Advisers Fidelity Emerging Markets Fund (FGOMX)	−3.6	0.0	9.2
9. JPMorgan Emerging Markets Equity Fund Class C (JEMCX)	−2.5	+0.4	8.1
10. Strategic Advisers Emerging Markets Fund (FSAMX)	−3.6	−0.5	7.7

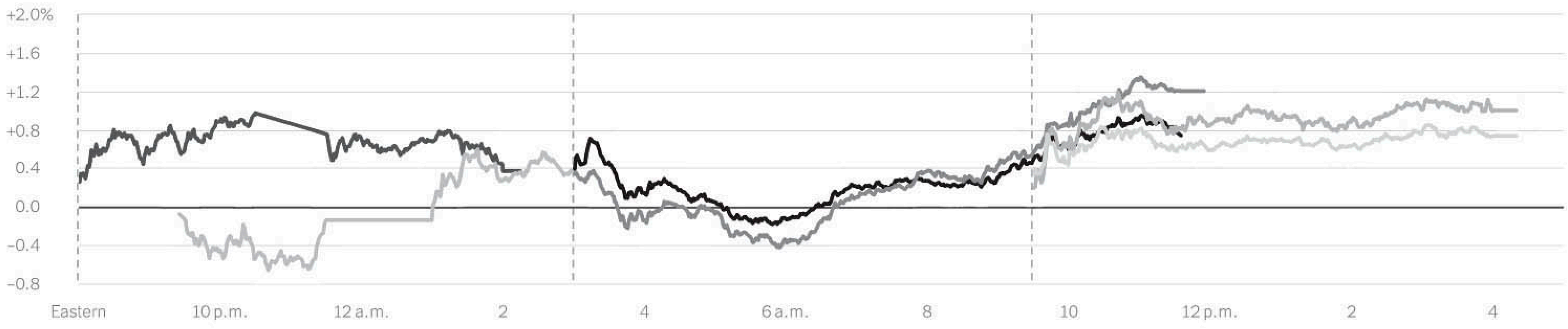
Source: Morningstar

Sector performance
S&P 500 SECTORS



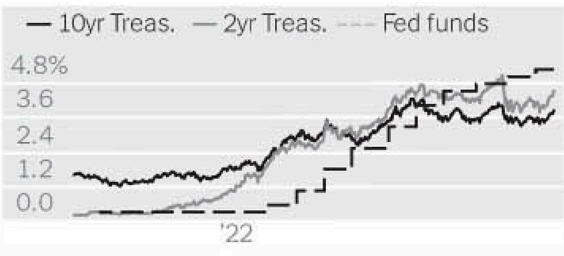
How stock markets fared yesterday in Asia ... **... in Europe** **... and North America**

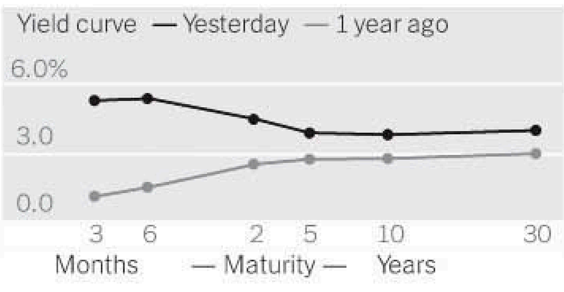
— Nikkei 225 (Japan): +0.4%
— Shanghai Composite (Shanghai): +0.4%
— FTSE 100 (London): +0.7%
— DAX (Frankfurt): +1.2%
— Dow Jones Industrials (New York): +1.0%
— S&P/TSX (Toronto): +0.7%



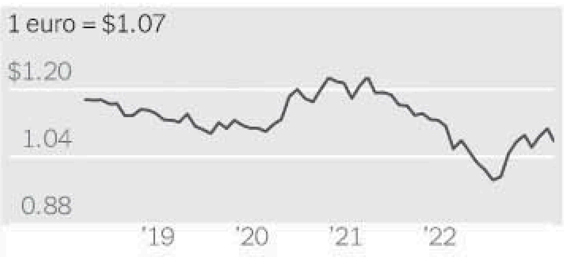
What Is Happening in Other Markets and the Economy

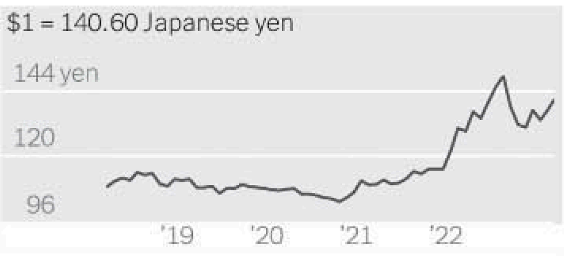
Bonds



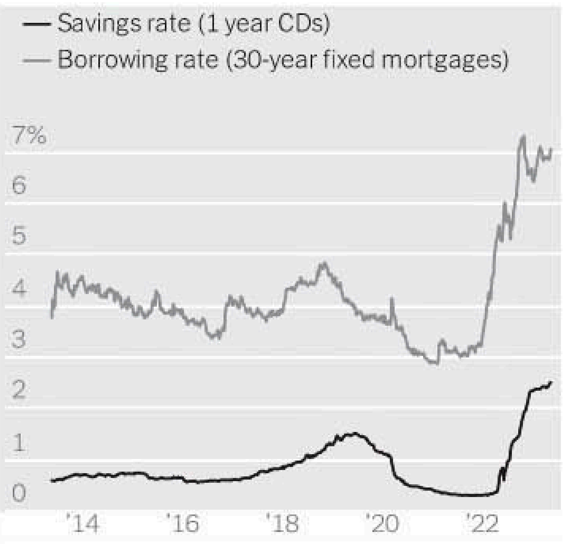


Currencies

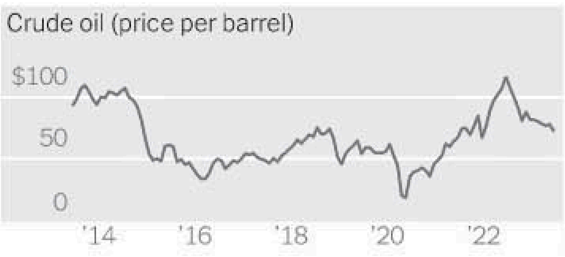


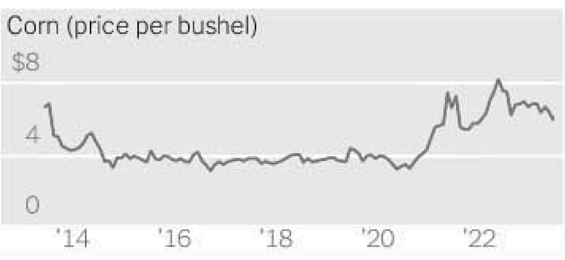


Consumer rates

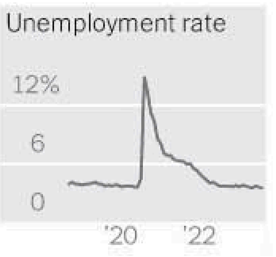


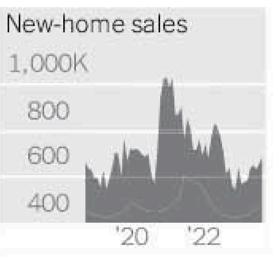
Commodities

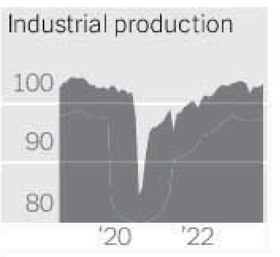




Economy







ECONOMY | FINANCE | MEDIA

Fed's Preferred Inflation Measure Inched Higher in April

By MADELEINE NGO
and BEN CASSELMAN

HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Unloading packages in Manhattan. The new data could complicate the path for Fed officials, who have been raising interest rates to cool the economy.

A measure of inflation most closely watched by Federal Reserve officials picked up in April, reflecting the difficult path ahead for economic policymakers as they weigh whether to raise interest rates again to bring down stubborn price increases.

The Personal Consumption Expenditures index climbed 4.4 percent in April from a year earlier, according to a Commerce Department report released on Friday. That was a slight increase from March, when prices climbed 4.2 percent on an annual basis. Still, prices are not climbing as fast they were in February, when the index rose 5.1 percent on an annual basis.

A "core" measure that tries to gauge underlying inflation trends by stripping out volatile food and energy prices rose 4.7 percent over the year through April, up slightly from 4.6 percent in March.

The core measure rose 0.4 percent in April from the prior month, up from 0.3 percent in March. That was slightly faster than some analysts had expected. Core inflation had been rising at a faster pace earlier in the year, climbing 0.6 percent in January.

The data reflected the recent moderation in price gains compared with earlier months, but it also underscored how stubborn inflation has been. That could complicate the path for Fed officials, who began raising interest rates last year to cool the economy and slow price growth.

Fed officials have also been monitoring consumer spending and Americans' income, both of which rose in April, according to the report.

Consumer spending increased 0.8 percent in April as Americans shelled out for cars, restaurant meals, movie tickets and other goods and services. That uptick followed a two-month slowdown in spending and exceeded forecasters' expectations. After-tax income rose 0.4 percent, fueled by a strong job market that continues to push up wages and bring more people into the work force.

Consumers' resilience is a mixed blessing for Fed officials, who worry that robust spending is contributing to inflation, but who also don't want it to slow so rapidly that the economy falls into recession. It is unclear how long consumers can continue to prop up the economic recovery. Savings that some households built up in the pandemic have begun to dwindle, and there are signs that companies are beginning to pull back on hiring.

Continued strength in spending and inflation is creating a challenge for the Fed, which has begun weighing whether to pause, at least temporarily, what has been an aggressive move to raise rates over the past year. Interest rates are now above 5 percent for the first time in 15 years.

The inflation numbers were heading in the "wrong direction for the Fed," said Diane Swonk, the chief economist at KPMG. She added that she expected Fed officials to have a "heated debate" over whether they should pause in June, which would in part depend on negotiations over raising the debt limit, but the latest inflation data made it harder to make that case.

4.4%

Increase in the Personal Consumption Expenditures index, compared with the previous year.

The White House and Republicans are trying to reach an agreement to raise the borrowing cap before June 5, when the United States could run out of cash to pay all of its bills on time. Failure to raise the debt limit in time to avoid defaulting on U.S. debt is likely to send the economy into a tailspin.

"If we can clear the debt ceiling, it opens the door for another hike in June," Ms. Swonk said. She added that Fed officials could skip next month and leave rates unchanged, but she expected the central bank to raise rates again at least twice more this year.

Core services prices excluding housing costs, a measure that the Fed and economists are watching closely, rose 0.42 percent, the biggest increase in three months, said Ian Shepherdson, the chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. Policymakers are already expecting housing costs to cool later in the year, because real-time private sector data has shown a slowdown in rent increases recently.

"These data raise the risk that the Fed will hike again in June, though our base case remains that rates will be left on hold," Mr. Shepherdson wrote in a note.

If data on job growth, which is set to be released next Friday, showed a big increase in payroll gains, that would change his outlook, he said.

The Fed raised interest rates by a quarter-point this month, the 10th straight increase since last year. Policymakers have hinted that they could hold off on another increase at their next meeting on June 13 and 14. Minutes from the Fed's last meeting showed that officials were split on their next move, with several leaning toward a pause.

"Several participants noted that if the economy evolved along the lines of their current outlooks, then further policy firming after this meeting may not be necessary," the minutes said.

Still, central bank officials have so far kept the door open to another rate increase next month, reiterating that they would continue monitoring incoming data on inflation, the labor market and tightening credit conditions from recent bank failures.

One big wild card for the Fed is the brinkmanship over the debt ceiling. Policymakers discussed that possibility in May, according to minutes of that meeting, with many officials saying it was "essential that the debt limit be raised in a timely manner" to avoid the risk of severely damaging the economy and rattling financial markets.

Christopher Waller, a Federal Reserve governor, said in a speech on Wednesday that another rate increase in June could be warranted, but that it was too soon to tell.

"Whether we should hike or skip at the June meeting will depend on how the data come in over the next three weeks," Mr. Waller said.

Although Fed officials have noted that inflation has eased in recent months, they have called it "unacceptably high" and far from the central bank's 2 percent goal.

They have also acknowledged some cooling in the labor market, as the number of job openings has fallen recently. But Fed officials have said labor market conditions are still too hot, pointing to solid monthly job gains, steady wage growth and an unemployment rate near historically low levels.

Policymakers have repeatedly said the labor market will need to soften to bring inflation back to a normal level. Officials acknowledge that wage gains did not initially cause the jump in price increases, but they worry that rapidly rising pay gains will make it more difficult to bring inflation under control.

"A loosening labor market, to help our fight against inflation, doesn't have to mean a recession or big job losses," Mr. Waller said. "But we do need to see more loosening than we have seen to help take the heat off the inflation rate."

NBCUniversal Hires Hollywood Outsider to Tamp Down the Drama

By BENJAMIN MULLIN

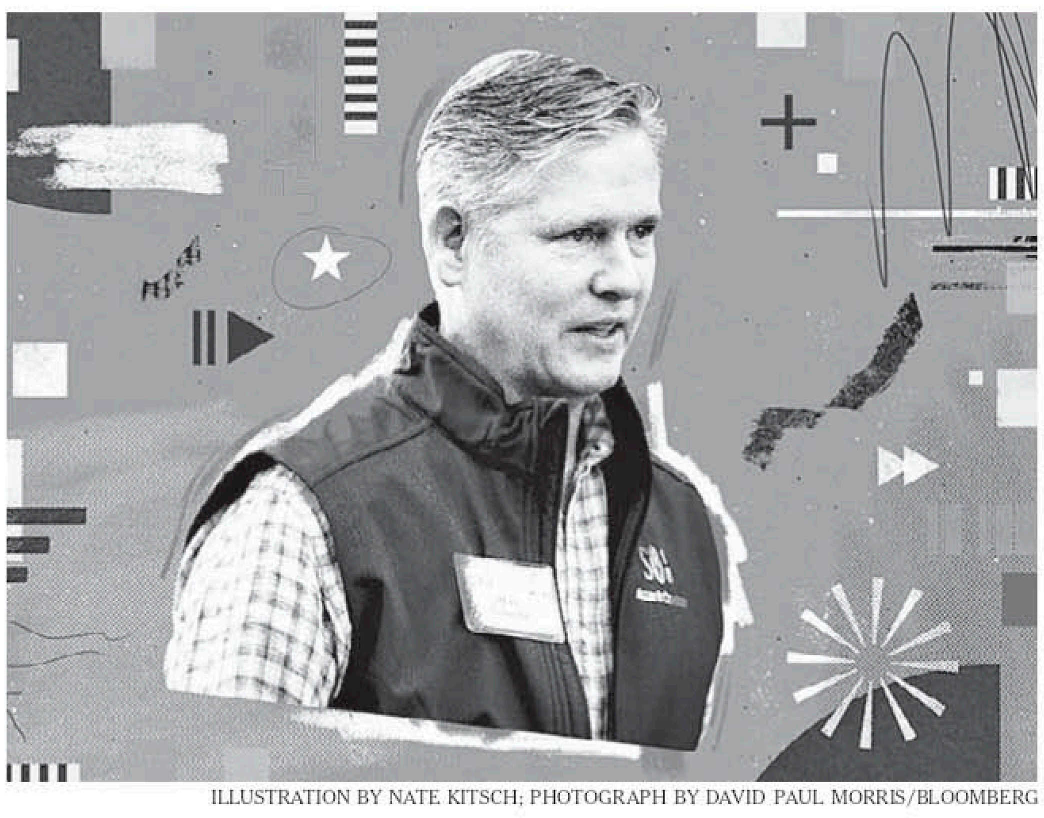


ILLUSTRATION BY NATE KITSCH; PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID PAUL MORRIS/BLOOMBERG

Mike Cavanagh, who recently became the acting head of NBCUniversal, was a senior executive at JPMorgan Chase during the financial tumult of 2008.

Mike Cavanagh couldn't have picked a trickier time to take over NBCUniversal.

Jeff Shell, who oversaw the media company before him, was fired after an investigation into sexual harassment. Linda Yaccarino, who ran the company's multibillion-dollar ad business, left abruptly this month to become the chief executive of Twitter.

NBCUniversal is losing billions on its streaming service, Peacock, while viewership of its traditional TV networks continues to fade. And Hollywood's writers are on strike.

But for Mr. Cavanagh, 57 — who recently became the acting head of NBCUniversal after his promotion last year to be president of Comcast, NBCUniversal's parent company — it may not come close to the toughest situation he has faced in his career.

In 2008, when the U.S. financial system was on the brink of failure, Mr. Cavanagh was a senior executive at JPMorgan Chase, one of the few major banks that was not at risk of collapse. He spent time alongside Jamie Dimon, JPMorgan's chief executive, and other executives during all-nighters to work out the details of acquiring Bear Stearns, a rival on the verge of bankruptcy.

"He's not a chest-thumper," Mr. Dimon said of Mr. Cavanagh in an interview. "He works hard, he sweats the details, and he gives a damn."

Though he has spent much of his professional career rubbing shoulders with the ultrawealthy, Mr. Cavanagh, a Long Island native and father of three, comes from a middle-class background. He spent the summer before college pumping gas at a filling station and covered expenses at Yale by working summer construction jobs.

He has become one of the few Comcast executives whom Brian Roberts, the company's chief executive, regularly consults on the most sensitive matters. Mr. Cavanagh was involved in discussions last year to combine NBCUniversal with the video game studio Electronic Arts, a deal that never came to fruition.

In charge of a media empire dealing with several challenges.

Comcast has not named Mr. Cavanagh as the permanent head of NBCUniversal, a media empire that includes the Universal Pictures movie studio, the NBC broadcast network, NBC News and MSNBC. But Comcast has described his job as a long-term appointment — and he has been acting as if he plans to be in charge for the long run.

Since taking over for Mr. Shell last month, he has traveled to Los Angeles to meet with film executives, including Donna Langley, the head of Universal Studios, and Chris Meledandri, the chief executive of the animation studio Illumination. While in Los Angeles, he had dinner with Jason Blum, the horror maestro behind Universal hits like "Get Out" and "Paranormal Activity." He has also toured the "Today" show in New York and visited the late-night hosts Jimmy Fallon and Seth Meyers at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, and he is planning a tour of an NBCUniversal theme park under construction in Orlando, Fla.

In these meetings, Mr. Cavanagh has emphasized that he's not planning on making any major changes for the next few months, according to a person with knowledge of his early moves in the job. But he has had to deal with some unexpected curveballs.

Mr. Cavanagh was unaware that Ms. Yaccarino had been selected to serve as Twitter's chief executive before Elon Musk, the company's owner, announced that he had "hired a new CEO" on Twitter this month, the person said. Hours later, Mr. Cavanagh called Ms. Yaccarino from a plane to coordinate her exit and pull her from the company's annual sales pitch to advertisers. The tone of their talk was friendly, according to a person familiar with the conversation, with Mr. Cavanagh wishing Ms. Yaccarino well and saying that he wouldn't stand in the way of her departure.

He has also had to manage the fallout from a complaint lodged by a CNBC anchor that led to Mr. Shell's dismissal. Mr. Cavanagh and Mr. Roberts fired Mr. Shell from the offices of a law firm in Philadelphia last month, people familiar with the matter said. Mr. Cavanagh called senior executives at NBCUniversal the weekend Mr. Shell was fired to inform them of the change, and he met with them in person in New York afterward to reassure them that the broader vision for NBCUniversal wasn't in question.

And the writers' strike, a possibility when Mr. Cavanagh took over, has ground to a halt NBC's late-night shows, including "Saturday Night Live."

Big challenges still loom, including getting NBCUniversal's streaming business to profitability and negotiating with Disney over the future ownership of the Hulu streaming service. Also hanging over NBCUniversal is the question of whether Comcast will decide to combine it with another company, as it attempted to do last year with Electronic Arts.

Despite those concerns, Comcast, where Mr. Cavanagh remains president, has some points in its favor that perhaps give NBCUniversal some breathing room. The company's share price has increased this year, outpacing some of its peers, and it has cash-rich businesses like broadband and wireless services that offset declines elsewhere.

Though Mr. Cavanagh has been a powerful figure at Comcast for years, involved in NBCUniversal's biggest decisions, he remains a relative outsider in Hollywood. After his run at JPMorgan, he joined the Carlyle Group, a private equity firm where he was co-president. He moved to Comcast in 2015 to become its chief financial officer.

Hollywood, which runs in large part on personal relationships, can be fickle toward new arrivals and even some who have been around for many years.

Mark Shapiro, the president and chief operating officer of Endeavor, the Hollywood entertainment and sports colossus that represents NBCUniversal anchors like Rachel Maddow and Alex Wagner, said Mr. Cavanagh's profile in Hollywood could work in his favor.

"He can enter these rooms unencumbered by preconceptions and bring a fresh perspective to the industry's most pressing challenges," Mr. Shapiro said.

Mr. Cavanagh had already forged some friendships with the Hollywood executives whom NBCUniversal is closest to. Mr. Blum, the founder of the production company Blumhouse, has said he has gotten to know Mr. Cavanagh over the years, having lunch with him at Comcast's headquarters in Philadelphia to discuss Mr. Blum's ambitions for his company.

Comcast's cash-rich businesses, combined with the need to significantly expand the number of video subscribers, makes Comcast the traditional media company most likely to do the next major deal, said Craig Moffett, a senior managing director of SVB MoffettNathanson, a research firm.

"Fundamentally, that's going to be the real career-defining decision for Mike," Mr. Moffett said.

Lazard Names Ex-Obama Aide As Successor To Its C.E.O.

By LAUREN HIRSCH

Lazard announced on Friday that Peter Orszag, who leads its core financial advisory business, will succeed Ken Jacobs as the company's chief executive on Oct. 1. Mr. Jacobs will stay on as executive chairman and continue to advise clients.

Mr. Orszag, a former Obama administration official, will oversee a 175-year-old financial institution with a long history of advising on major corporate deals at a time when its mainstay business faces huge challenges.

"Over his career spanning both banking and government, Peter has proven to be a strategic, visionary and decisive leader, with deep relationships across the industry and the ability to effectively lead Lazard through evolving global markets and complex geopolitical dynamics," Richard Parsons, the firm's lead independent director, said in a statement.

Lazard did not say when its succession planning began, but Mr. Orszag, 54, wrote in a memo to employees on Friday that the move followed a "selection process that has been in the works for quite some time."

An economist by training, Mr. Orszag regularly appears on CNBC and Bloomberg Television. He rose through the ranks in Washington and on Wall Street — he worked for Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, as well as at Citigroup — giving him a useful background to running one of the world's most prominent independent banks.

But he will confront a tough time for investment banks. Through Thursday, deal-making this year was down 40 percent from a year ago, according to Refinitiv. And rising interest rates, increasingly tough antitrust enforcement and a slowing economy make a resurgence in big-ticket mergers and acquisitions unlikely anytime soon.

An institution that advises on corporate deals faces challenges.

The challenging environment has hit Lazard, which said last month that it was laying off 10 percent of its work force; the bank's shares have fallen 11 percent since then. Rivals like Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley have also cut staff.

In the memo to colleagues on Friday morning, Mr. Orszag said the firm's ambition "should be to become the pre-eminent independent, global, go-to destination on all aspects of complex corporate finance, investing and strategic decision-making."

A top priority for Mr. Orszag is expanding Lazard's asset management business, which oversees more than $200 billion of assets and represents 40 percent of its business. Asset management has become popular among Wall Street banks as a steady source of revenue that can offset volatility in investment banking; Mr. Orszag told employees that growth could come from acquisitions.

Mr. Orszag also said Lazard's investment banking business would look for growth opportunities in private capital markets and through work in the Middle East.

Among his other priorities are to "attract and retain top talent through a modern workplace including our technology platform, diversity and work-from-home flexibility," Mr. Orszag said.

The firm will announce other changes to its management before October.

MIKE BLAKE/REUTERS

Peter Orszag worked for Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, as well as at Citigroup. He regularly appears on CNBC and Bloomberg.

PERSONAL FINANCE | PUBLISHING | AUTOMOBILES

College Savings Plans See More Deposits

As inflation eases and the stock market recovers, 529 savings plans are attracting more contributions.

Your Money Adviser

By ANN CARRNS

Contributions to 529 college savings programs fell late last year and early this year, according to industry data, as consumers saved less overall and battled high inflation. But contributions appeared to be rebounding in recent months.

The state-sponsored savings accounts, named for a section of the tax code, can be used to pay for education expenses, primarily college costs. Money deposited in the accounts grows tax-free and is withdrawn tax-free when spent on eligible expenses like tuition, room and board, and books.

In the first three months of the year, estimated net inflows to 529 savings plans — contributions minus withdrawals — totaled $1.6 billion, down from more than $3 billion a year earlier, according to ISS Market Intelligence, a financial research and analytics firm. Still, that was an improvement over the fourth quarter of 2022, when net inflows were $1.5 billion. And those fourth-quarter inflows were significantly lower than the more than $4 billion in the same period of 2021.

The drop in contributions was a result of not only reduced overall savings and high inflation but also the postpandemic reopening of the economy, which released pent-up demand for spending, Paul Curley, director of savings research at ISS, said in an email.

It didn't help that last year was a dismal year for investors, including those with money in 529 plans. The losses in 529 plans stung, especially for families with children who were already enrolled or just starting college and had little time for their holdings to recover.

"People may contribute less when they feel less wealthy," said Pam Lucina, chief fiduciary officer for Northern Trust, a financial services firm.

The stock market's gains this year, along with slowing inflation, have encouraged families to put more money into 529s, Mr. Curley said.

Rachel Biar, chair of the College Savings Plans Network, a group of state 529 plan administrators, said that last year "was a challenging year." But she added, "We do see contributions coming back."

Contributions to Nebraska's 529 plan, for example, which Ms. Biar oversees as the state's assistant treasurer, have rebounded almost to the same levels as a year ago, she said.

Even with the market volatility, Joel Dickson, global head of advice methodology at Vanguard, said the fundamental value of 529s as a tax-advantaged way to save for education had not changed.

"It still makes a lot of sense," he said.

At Edward Jones, the annual survey shows that while respondents want to save for college, two out of three don't know what a 529 plan is, said Steve Rueschhoff, principal of managed investments at the company.

Overall 529 plan assets, reflecting deposits and investment gains, reached almost $409 billion in the first quarter of this year — down from $432 billion a year earlier but up more than 5 percent from $388 billion at the end of 2022.

Despite the recent market fluctuations, 529 plans offer a way for families to reduce the amount they have to borrow for college, Ms. Biar said. The College Board estimates that the average annual in-state cost of attending a four-year public college is $27,940, while the cost at a four-year private nonprofit college is $57,570.

"We still want people to consider a 529," Ms. Biar said, adding that most plans have conservative options, including savings accounts that are federally insured, for people who can't tolerate risk.

The College Savings Plans Network has been working to expand awareness of the college savings plans and has encouraged legislation that broadens the allowable uses for 529 funds. Congress, for instance, has expanded the permissible use of 529 funds to allow families to save for educational expenses other than college costs, like tuition for kindergarten through Grade 12, as well as for apprenticeships. Plus, up to $10,000 from a 529 can now be used to repay student loans.

Starting next year, under the Secure 2.0 Act enacted in 2022, "leftover" funds in a 529 plan can be rolled over into a Roth individual retirement account for the 529's beneficiary. This is helpful, Ms. Lucina said, because some families may balk at contributing to a 529 out of fear that they will owe taxes and a penalty if they have not spent all the funds in the account — say, because their child doesn't go to college — and they withdraw the money for other purposes.

"People get worried about overfunding the 529," she said.

Under the new law, up to $35,000 can be transferred from a 529 to a Roth I.R.A. You can transfer up to the annual maximum Roth contribution — currently $6,500 for people under 50 — each year. If you have more than that left over, you would have to transfer it over a period of years.

Other rules apply: The 529 account, for instance, must have been open for at least 15 years, and no contributions or earnings from the last five years can be transferred.

Still, if you don't meet the rules for a Roth rollover, you may avoid paying taxes and penalties by changing the 529 account's beneficiary to a sibling or another family member.

With Roth I.R.A.s, you contribute money after taxes — you don't get a tax deduction, as with a traditional I.R.A. But when you withdraw money, you typically don't have to pay taxes on the earnings.

"It starts healthy habits of contributing to a retirement account," Ms. Lucina said.

TILL LAUER

Q. and A. About 529 Plans

Can I get a tax deduction for contributing money to a 529?

There is no federal tax deduction for 529 contributions, but many states offer tax breaks.

Do states offer incentives for opening and funding a 529 plan?

Each May, many 529 plans offer promotions and prizes to encourage families to open accounts and begin saving for college. South Carolina, for instance, is offering grants of $529 to parents of babies born in the state on May 29, to fund new FutureScholar 529 accounts. And California offers a $100 bonus to families that open a ScholarShare 529 account from May 22 to May 31. A list of state promotions is available on the College Savings Plans Network website.

What if my 529 account loses money as my child is entering college?

One option is to consider using other funds — perhaps by taking out student loans — to pay for the first years on campus, giving the 529 holdings time to recover for later years of college or for graduate school, Ms. Biar said. You could potentially repay up to $10,000 in loans using funds from the 529.

Decades Old? No Problem: Publisher Makes Bet on Forgotten Titles.

By ELIZABETH A. HARRIS

The life of a good book can span hundreds of years, but most of the time, a book gets a flash of attention when it is first published — if its author is lucky. Then, it fades away.

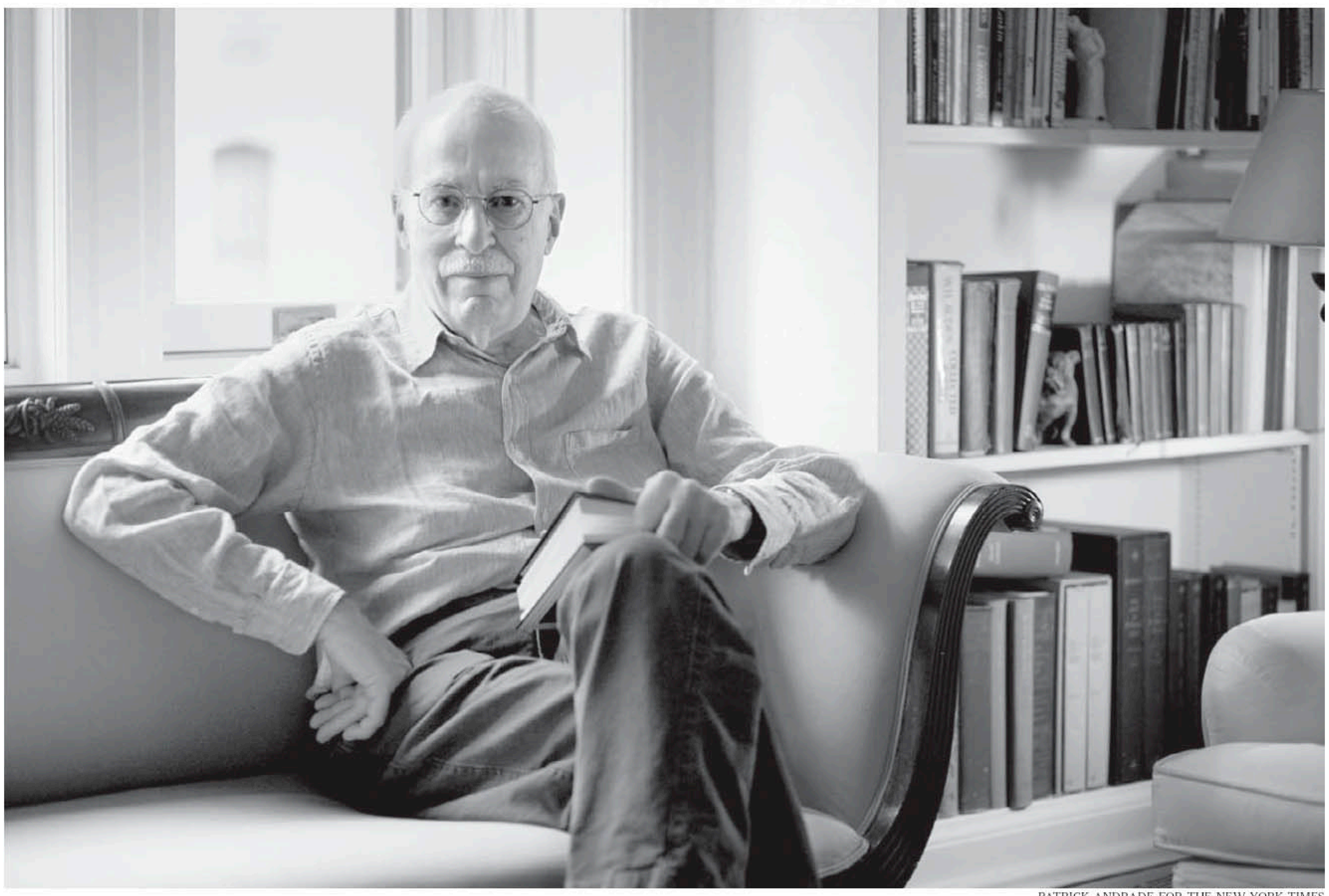
A company called Open Road Integrated Media is trying to change that by giving a second life to older books. It does that by using machine learning to make those titles more visible online and, with a new venture announced on Wednesday, by republishing books that were largely forgotten or had fallen out of print.

"There's potential to breathe new life into these books," said David Steinberger, chief executive of Open Road, "and that flies in the face of conventional wisdom in the industry."

Publishing houses traditionally focus their marketing efforts almost entirely on new books. Once a title has been out for a while, publishers generally have to move on to the next one, no matter how much they believe in the book. There is little to direct attention toward older titles, although in rare cases, new readers may find them through a movie or television adaptation or even popularity on TikTok.

Open Road markets older books with a machine-learning technology that scans the internet for every mention of a title — digging through reviews, social media posts and retail websites — and then generates marketing suggestions for that title. The program also experiments with pricing and promotions on retail websites to try to increase sales and by adjusting keywords so that the books surface in search results.

Another important prong in the company's approach is an army of about three million heavy readers who receive Open Road's newsletters. By following links to books on retail websites like Amazon, those readers stimulate algorithms that give the titles better placement on the sites.



PATRICK ANDRADE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Season Ticket," by the longtime New Yorker writer Roger Angell, who died in 2022, is among the older books that will be republished by Re-Discovery Lit.

On average, Open Road is able to double the sales of the backlist titles it promotes, Steinberger said. Sales of "1942: The Year That Tried Men's Souls," by Winston Groom, have more than doubled to 35,000 e-books sold since Open Road took it on, he said. "The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man," by J. Drew Lanham, has sold more than 15,000 e-books, also more than double its previous sales.

Grove Atlantic, an independent publisher, is working with Open Road to promote about 1,500 of its backlist titles, including "1942: The Year That Tried Men's Souls" and "Black Hawk Down." Morgan Entrekin, the publisher of Grove Atlantic, said that after seeing the results, the company became an investor in Open Road.

Every publisher, he said, has put out books it knew were great but that just didn't work in the marketplace. "It's very gratifying to see them sell," Entrekin said. "The fact is that, over time, quality can win out."

Open Road is primarily in the e-book business, and while its republished works will be available for print on demand in the future, they expect the focus to remain on digital versions.

A new venture by Open Road, Re-Discovery Lit, will republish books that either are out of print or have such meager sales that the rights have reverted from the publisher back to the author. (Typically, publishing contracts include a clause to this effect.)

Re-Discovery will start with a few hundred books this year. They include "Season Ticket," by the longtime New Yorker writer Roger Angell; "Threats and Promises," by the New York Times best-selling romance author Barbara Delinsky; and a thriller series called "Who Killed Peggy Sue?" by Eileen Goudge, also a New York Times best seller.

"We have these great books that are waiting to be found by a new set of readers," said Sara Shandler, editor in chief of Alloy Entertainment, which published Goudge and is now working with Open Road. "But with so much focus on what's next, some of those terrific titles get forgotten."

Hyundai Plans Georgia Plant Along With LG

By IVAN PENN

Hyundai Motor Group and LG Energy Solutions announced plans on Thursday to build a $4.3 billion electric vehicle battery plant in Georgia, the latest clean energy facility to come to the state.

The project is expected to bring 3,000 new jobs to southeast Georgia by the end of 2025. It is the second battery manufacturing plant that Hyundai is developing in the state, which has used incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act to open new facilities. Hyundai announced in December that it had teamed up with SK On, a South Korean electric vehicle battery developer, to build a plant in Bartow County.

"Hyundai Motor Group is focusing on its electrification efforts to secure a leadership position in the global auto industry," Jaehoon Chang, president and chief executive of Hyundai Motor Company, said in a statement.

The facility is planned for Bryan County, Ga., near the Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant America, which is under construction, the company said. The Metaplant facility will produce Hyundai, Genesis and Kia electric vehicles.

Senator Jon Ossoff, a Georgia Democrat, said in an interview that incentives for clean energy manufacturing in the Inflation Reduction Act made the plant possible.

"This is yet another huge win for Georgia," he said.

In April, Mr. Ossoff led a trade mission to South Korea, where he met with senior executives from both companies.

The announcement followed a decision in January by Hanwha QCells to tap the federal climate and tax measure to expand its operations with a $2.5 billion Georgia facility that will produce solar panels and their components.

The New York Times

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TRAVEL

Strikes, Delays And Lost Bags: How to Survive Your Vacation

With summer on the horizon, experts are renewing their annual alarm to brace for the busiest travel season of the year — and they are expecting more passengers than ever to fly.

The surge comes against a troubled landscape for air travelers. Complaints against the airlines have never been higher. Strikes threaten to disrupt several major cities in Europe. And experts say that the air traffic system in the United States is not well equipped to handle the heavy consumer demand.

To help, we've put together this guide to identify the pain points and provide the advice you need to navigate smoothly even when the going gets rough.

IN THE AIR

Aviation officials are taking steps like reducing flights and hiring staff to try to avoid disruptions.

By NIRAJ CHOKSHI

YUKAI DU

The number of Americans who will fly this summer could eclipse the prepandemic high from 2019. That would be great news for airlines, but it could also cause a backlash against the industry if it fails to keep up with demand and delays or cancels thousands of flights.

The recovery from the pandemic has been punctuated by several major travel meltdowns, stranding millions of travelers and angering lawmakers and regulators. In recent months, the Transportation Department has proposed requiring greater transparency around airline fees and requiring companies to more fully compensate people whose flights are delayed or canceled.

A major misstep could increase political pressure on lawmakers and regulators to take a harder line against airlines and the Federal Aviation Administration, which directs air traffic and has also had notable failures in recent years.

"A lot of focus is going to be on the airlines, and I don't think they can afford to have a summer like they did last year," said William J. McGee, a senior fellow at the American Economic Liberties Project, a research and advocacy group that has criticized consolidation in the airline business. "This pattern they had last year of canceling flights at the last minute, in many cases due to crew shortages, that's just unacceptable. They're not going to be able to do that again, I don't think, not without some serious repercussions."

Industry executives and F.A.A. officials say they made changes after recent disruptions and meltdowns that should make air travel less chaotic and more pleasant this summer than in recent years.

Why have airlines struggled so much?

Nearly every major airline and the air traffic control system have suffered a meltdown at some point during the recovery from the pandemic.

Early on, when coronavirus vaccinations were still being developed and tested and restrictions prevented people from traveling, carriers encouraged thousands of employees to take buyouts or retire early even though the federal government had provided airlines with billions of dollars to pay employee salaries. When air travel quickly rebounded, airlines, like every other business, struggled to hire and train employees, including pilots, flight attendants and baggage handlers.

Even when companies got a hold on hiring, airlines remained particularly susceptible to disruptions. During the holidays leading into 2022, a resurgent coronavirus sickened huge numbers of crew members, compounding problems caused by bad weather and resulting in thousands of flight cancellations nationwide.

Another problem: The aviation system uses technology and ways of doing business that were developed years or decades ago and are showing their age. Around Christmas last year, Southwest Airlines struggled to overcome bad storms because of insufficient equipment and inadequate crew scheduling software and practices, stranding millions of travelers. Weeks later, the F.A.A. briefly stopped all flights from taking off nationwide after a contractor deleted a file in a dated pilot alerting system.

The industry has put in place changes to minimize disruptions, including hiring more staff, reducing the number of flights and adding more resilience to their networks. They appear to be helping: Through early May, weather was by far the leading cause of flight delays, and cancellations were limited compared with 2019.

What will the summer look like?

So far this year, air travel has returned to prepandemic levels, with more than 2.1 million people passing through airport checkpoints daily, as many as during the same period in 2019, according to Transportation Security Administration data. Airport traffic has already broken pandemic records on several days this May, according to the T.S.A.

But traffic could soon exceed even those 2019 volumes. This Memorial Day weekend, the start of the summer travel season, is expected to be the third busiest in more than two decades, with 5.4 percent more people planning to fly than in the same weekend before the pandemic, according to the AAA travel club.

Dozens of major airports are also expected to see double-digit growth in traffic this summer, from last summer, according to Airlines for America, a trade association. That list includes airports serving big cities, such as New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Seattle and Denver. It also includes six hub airports for United Airlines, five for Delta Air Lines and four for American Airlines.

What is the F.A.A. doing?

To keep flights running smoothly this summer, the F.A.A. is relaxing rules at some busy airports.

Those rules require airlines to use or lose takeoff and landing slots that they've been assigned. But by easing that requirement from mid-May to mid-September, the F.A.A. hopes to encourage carriers to fly fewer, larger planes without fear of losing their spots. The policy applies to the three major airports serving New York City, as well as Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

The F.A.A. said it had relaxed the rules partly because of a staffing shortfall at an air traffic control center that serves the New York airports and employs only about half its target number of air traffic controllers. Without the change, the F.A.A. said, flight delays this summer could increase up to 45 percent from last summer. The problems could reverberate nationwide because many flights connect in New York.

The F.A.A. has also said it has taken steps to better accommodate flights around space launches, which have increased, particularly in Florida but also in California and Texas. In early May, the agency announced that it had opened up 169 new routes, primarily at high altitudes and along the East Coast, to ease congestion.

What are airlines doing?

Some airlines say they've prepared for summer by planning to use bigger planes, hiring more staff and more closely watching for early signs of disruptions.

At the F.A.A.'s request, several major airlines have agreed to fly less, but with bigger planes, at some busy airports. United, for example, said it planned to have 30 fewer daily departures out of its Newark hub than in the summer of 2019. But because it's using larger planes, the airline said, it will offer 5 percent more seats in the New York area.

The airline has cut the number of round-trip flights between Newark and St. Louis to three a day this July from four a day last year. But because it swapped out one of the regional jets that it typically uses for a larger Airbus A319, United is offering 18 percent more seats on that route than last year.

"We very, very, very much want to fly a larger schedule," said Patrick Quayle, a senior vice president for global network planning and alliances at United. "But what we care about most is running a reliable operation."

Other airlines are also planning to use larger planes on certain routes, a practice that has accelerated in recent years and is known as "upgauging." Airlines have scheduled about 5 percent more flights within the United States this summer than last summer, and about 10 percent more seats will be available, according to Cirium, an aviation data provider. Compared with the summer of 2019, airlines this summer will fly 10 percent fewer flights yet offer 3 percent more seats.

The industry has also aggressively recruited and trained new employees. As of March, passenger airlines employed the equivalent of nearly 487,000 full-time employees, the most since October 2001, according to an analysis of federal data by Airlines for America, the industry group. Delta's chief executive, Ed Bastian, recently said the airline had finished a hiring spree.

"The hiring rates that we're at now are just normal hiring rates for normal attrition, not of the massive bulge that we needed to go through to restore the business," Mr. Bastian told Wall Street analysts on a conference call in April. "And so not only are we able to reduce the focus on getting out and hiring people, we can take the people that have been doing the training and put them back in the business."

Airlines have also tried to be smarter about spotting disruptions before they result in mass delays and cancellations. After its winter holiday debacle, Southwest said it would better use real-time data to keep tabs on the health of its network. American said it had also put into place a system called Heat, which would allow it to quickly delay and cancel flights in response to mounting problems while minimizing the number of customers affected.

As travel returns to prepandemic levels, airlines strain to keep up.

TRAVEL

Strikes, Delays And Lost Bags: How to Survive Your Vacation

ILLUSTRATIONS BY YUKAI DU

SECURITY LINES

Here are some programs and apps to help speed your way through checkpoints.

By SHANNON SIMS

More travelers may mean longer lines at airport security and customs and immigration checkpoints. The Transportation Security Administration said this week that it expects to screen 2.6 million passengers on Friday, which it predicts to be the busiest travel day of Memorial Day weekend. That's more even than 2019, when 2.4 million travelers were screened.

In advance of the holiday, the agency said that it was taking measures to speed travelers through. Teenagers under 18 can now accompany parents or guardians who are enrolled in T.S.A. PreCheck through security when traveling on the same reservation; children 12 and under had previously been able to accompany their parents.

And the agency said its staffing levels were up because all its employees were getting a raise as of July 1. The promise of higher wages had made making recruiting efforts easier.

The agency says technology will also

DELAYED AND CANCELED

Choose your flights defensively, and know your rights in the event of a change.

By CHRISTINE CHUNG

The Federal Aviation Administration says that weather is the leading cause of flight delays. But last summer, most delays were man-made, according to data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. From June to August last year, 8 percent of delays were caused by airlines and about 5 percent were attributed to issues with the national aviation system, which includes air traffic control problems. Less than 1 percent of the delays were weather-related, B.T.S. data shows.

The F.A.A. has recently taken steps to pre-empt potential chaos this summer. It is allowing airlines, including Delta, United and American, to operate fewer flights and instead use larger aircraft that can accommodate more passengers.

The change will help "mitigate the risk of encountering delays and cancellations," said Michael McCormick, an assistant professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and a former F.A.A. control tower operator.

The agency has also announced 169 new routes along the East Coast that it said are more direct.

But that doesn't mean things won't fall apart, and knowing your rights is key.

Airlines in the U.S. are not required to compensate travelers for delays and cancellations. But all 10 major carriers will rebook passengers on another flight if the situation was under the airline's control and will pay for meals when travelers have waited for three hours or more.

Travel advisers recommended considering trip insurance, which usually covers flight delays, and checking credit card policies on reimbursements for travel mishaps. Monitoring airline apps and opting in for text updates is also a good idea, they said. And if your flight is delayed, best to stay close to the gate.

If you've reached frequent flier status or purchased premium tickets or priority status, there is a priority line at the check-in counter, or a phone number, where service will be faster, said James Ferrara, the founder of InteleTravel, a global travel adviser network.

Many airlines offer speedy customer service through Twitter. But it's not the only way to reach them. Call the airline's international phone line, which won't be as slammed in a slowdown, said Scott Keyes, the founder of Going.com, a website that sends alerts for travel deals. Delta also has a dedicated hotline for travelers with flights within the next 48 hours, Mr. Keyes added.

Self-rebooking online or through the airline's app has also gotten easier, experts said.

Mr. McCormick advised travelers to have a backup plan should flights go awry and to select flights "wisely" by assessing your options for connecting flights. He advises avoiding routes that require you to change planes in airports where summer weather like thunderstorms and hurricanes routinely causes cancellations and delays. "Pick different flights," he said.

One rule of thumb for summer travel is to book flights departing before 3 p.m., Mr. Ferrara said, adding that cancellations and delays tend to occur later in the day. It's also always an option to stay home on the holidays, when cancellations and delays tend to cluster, Mr. Ferrara said, or "consider driving."

If possible, get a nonstop flight and don't check a bag, Mr. Keyes said.

ON THE GROUND

Gasoline prices, a source of pain last year, have come way down. Some travelers are saving hundreds of dollars.

By CLIFFORD KRAUSS

HOUSTON — Americans who fill up their cars this Memorial Day weekend will catch a break — at least compared with a year ago, when gasoline prices were soaring.

The national average price for regular gasoline is a full dollar a gallon lower than a year ago. Drivers paid over $4.60 in May 2022, and prices had reached $5 by the second week of June. This week, they paid just over $3.50 a gallon for regular gasoline, according to AAA, the motor club.

Many energy experts said they expected prices to stay around these levels for much of the summer, barring a major disruption to global oil supplies.

Because gasoline prices are posted on street corners on big colorful signs, they can have a powerful psychological impact on consumers, especially on middle- and lower-income people who tend to drive older, less fuel-efficient vehicles and spend a larger proportion of their income on energy than affluent people.

"Who wouldn't be happy to save the money?" said Eddie White, 46, who uses his pickup truck to make deliveries and offer rides through Uber. Filling up at least once a day, Mr. White, who lives in the Houston area, said he was saving roughly $420 a week. He is using that money to pay for classes that will help him become an insurance adjuster.

Aaron Hawkins, 22, manages a phone store and serves in the Army Reserve. His Reserve duties require him to drive regularly between Houston and Baton Rouge, La. He said he was saving between $150 and $200 a month on gas.

"It's a lot better for everyone," he said of the lower prices.

Prices spiked last year after Russia invaded Ukraine in February. Oil traders had expected Russian exports to fall because of the sanctions imposed on the country by the United States and its allies in response to the invasion.

The war is still grinding on, but Russia has found a way to keep selling its oil, though at heavily discounted prices, primarily to China and India. As a result, global oil supplies remain plentiful. It also helped that the United States and other industrialized countries released oil from their strategic reserves when prices were surging.

At the same time, demand has not shot up for oil and the fuels produced from it. In the United States, use of motor fuels has not changed much from last year and has yet to recover to prepandemic levels. But that may be starting to change. Gasoline demand climbed over the last month, and AAA predicts a 7 percent increase in holiday weekend travel from last year.

Because supply was stronger and demand was weaker than many traders and analysts had expected, the U.S. benchmark oil price gradually fell from around $120 a barrel last summer to around $73 a barrel on Friday.

Prices briefly spiked last month after Saudi Arabia, Russia and other major oil producers announced that they would cut production by 1.1 million barrels a day, or slightly more than 1 percent of global supplies.

But that rally sputtered out, and oil prices have been falling in recent weeks. Many traders are increasingly concerned that the Federal Reserve's interest rate increases, designed to bring down inflation, will slow the economy and might cause a recession. Central banks in Europe are also pursuing similar policies.

Fears of a recession have also grown in recent weeks because of the halting debt ceiling negotiations between President Biden and House Republicans. Elsewhere, signs that China and India, the world's most populous countries, are not buying as much fuel as expected have also put a damper on oil prices, according to a report by the Eurasia Group, a research and consulting firm.

"Last year, you had higher growth in demand and lower growth in supply," said Linda Giesecke, the head of demand analysis at ESAI Energy, a consulting firm. "This year, demand and supply are relatively evenly balanced."

After nearly two years of contending with high inflation, many Americans appear to have changed how and where they buy gasoline and diesel, said Tom Kloza, the global head of energy analysis at Oil Price Information Service. Many people have started buying fuel at big-box retailers, which often offer lower prices than independent gas stations.

Another factor dampening prices is the growing popularity of electric vehicles. Battery-powered vehicles could become increasingly important in reducing demand for fossil fuels and limiting climate change over the next decade.

Patrick De Haan, the head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy, a company that tracks gas prices, said he expected the national average price for regular gas to stay under $4 a gallon this summer. He estimated that consumers would spend $1.6 billion less than last year on gasoline over Memorial Day weekend. The Energy Department recently estimated that the average national price for gasoline this summer would be $3.40 a gallon, about 20 percent lower than last year.

Of course, prices vary widely across the country, in part because of the differences in state gas taxes and the cost of real estate, labor and other expenses. The Energy Department estimated that the average price of gasoline on the West Coast would be $4.30 a gallon this summer, about 90 cents above the national average.

Gasoline prices are typically highest between April and September, when people drive more. In addition, summer-grade gasoline tends to be more expensive to produce because pollution regulations require that it be blended differently.

speed things up.

Now, at 16 U.S. airports, passengers no longer need to show their boarding passes to go through security, although they may need to show them at the gate. At these airports, travelers can swipe their identifying documents — a driver's license or a passport, for example — in front of the security officer, and facial recognition technology will check for a match. Then an officer will check the ID before sending the passenger through.

New scanners that expedite security by allowing liquids and laptops to stay inside the bags are on the way as well, but "it's going to be years before this becomes a reality," said the T.S.A. press secretary, R. Carter Langston.

To speed your way, it can help to sign up for one of the programs offered by the government or Clear, a private company. But time is running out.

T.S.A.'s PreCheck program permits travelers departing from U.S. airports to go through screening without removing their shoes, belts or laptops, which can speed the process so significantly that in April, the T.S.A. said, 89 percent of PreCheck passengers waited less than five minutes in line. Many credit cards reimburse for PreCheck enrollment, which normally costs $78. And once approved, PreCheck lasts for five years. Although approval can be quick, it could take up to 60 days.

For $22 more, passengers can apply for Global Entry, which includes PreCheck, is also valid for five years and expedites entry into the U.S. from international destinations. Many credit cards also reimburse for Global Entry. The big drawback is that approval requires an interview, and the current average wait time is four to six months, Rhonda Lawson, a Customs and Border Protection public affairs specialist, said in an email. According to C.B.P., the number of travelers arriving at U.S. airports is almost 30 percent higher than last year.

If you can't wait for PreCheck or Global Entry approval, the privately run Clear Plus offers a five-minute application and approval process. Members have their identities verified by Clear representatives and then are escorted to the front of security lines. Because users still undergo the airport's physical screening, Clear offers maximum efficiency when used in tandem with PreCheck. Of course, the V.I.P. treatment comes at a cost: Clear runs $189 each year. But family members can be added for $60 each, and some credit cards and airlines offer discounts.

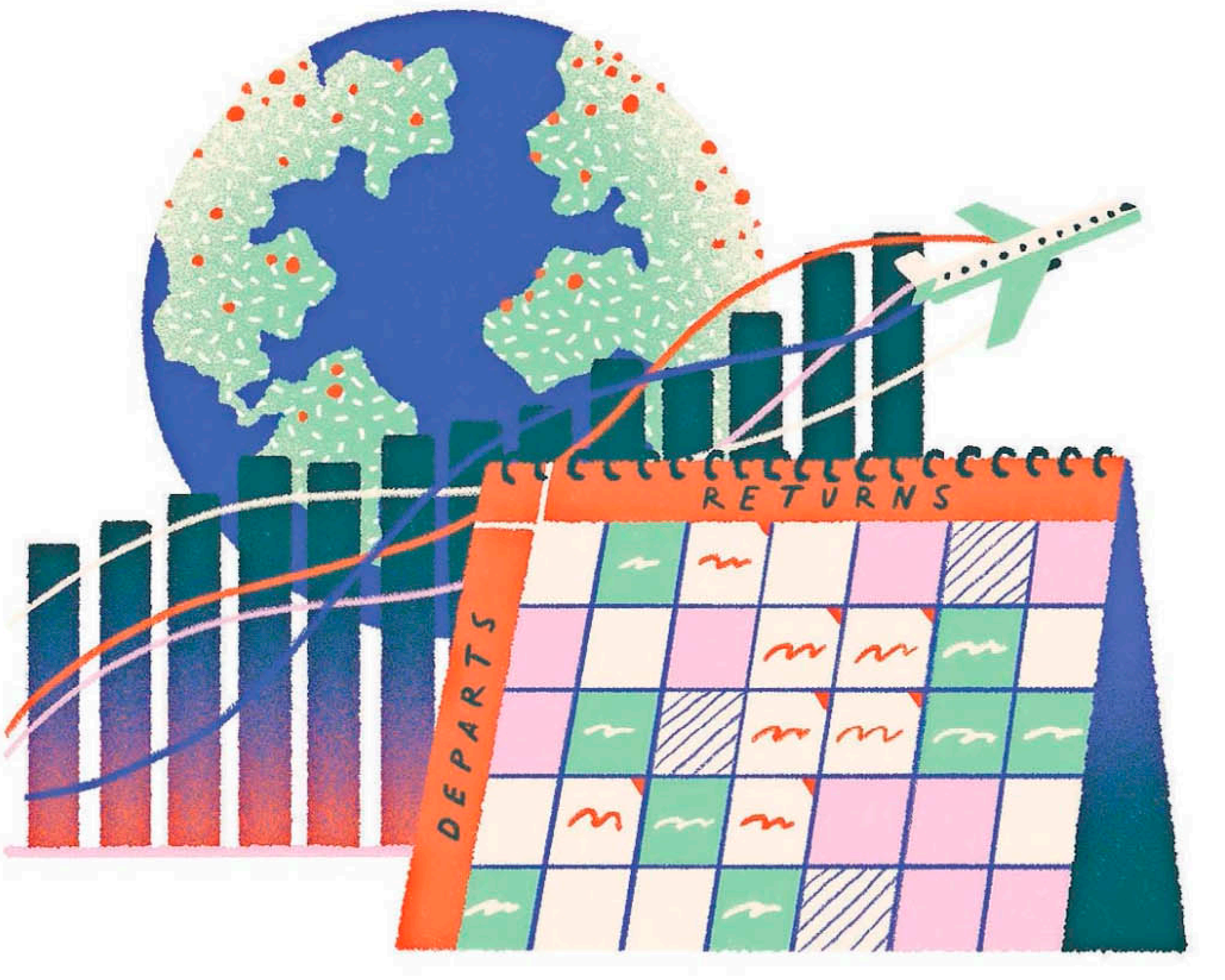
If you don't want to pay for these programs, or don't have the time to wait for approval, you've still got some digital resources at your disposal for predicting airport lines.

T.S.A. has its own app, MyTSA, that shows security wait times. Some commercial apps, like MiFlight and App in the Air, offer crowdsourced information on the current wait times at various airports.

If you're re-entering the U.S. from abroad, the Global Entry passport-scanning kiosks now are paperless — no more receipts. Instead, your face will be scanned and then double-checked by a C.B.P. officer.

You'll go through a similar process even without Global Entry. In the majority of U.S. airports, the passport-scanning kiosks are gone and instead a facial biometrics system is being used, said Ms. Lawson, adding that travelers can opt out and go through the traditional process by notifying a C.B.P. officer.

To get a sense of how long it might take to get through, consult the C.B.P.'s airport wait time website, which tracks the average and maximum wait times in immigration lines for both U.S. citizens and noncitizens. Although it doesn't have real-time data, by checking the previous week's waits on the same day and at the same time as your arrival, you can get a good sense of what kind of a line you could be facing.



AIRFARES

With high ticket prices, flexibility is key and booking early will still save money.

By ELAINE GLUSAC

Even as inflation shows signs of slowing, airfares remain high, up nearly 10 percent in April compared with the same period in 2019, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Coming out of the pandemic, fewer flights, a shortage of airline workers and higher fuel costs have helped push prices up. And consumers, eager to travel, haven't revolted sufficiently to persuade carriers to bring them down.

But the picture can be confusing — and changeable.

According to the travel booking app Hopper, current prices on domestic airfares are well below last year right now, but are expected to rise through June when summer airfares typically peak. Hopper predicts the peak for a domestic round-trip booking will reach $328, better than the $400 last June but still 4 percent higher than the same period in 2019.

International fares, where available flights lag demand, are a bleaker story: Hopper expects tickets abroad this summer to be at a five-year high, up 32 percent to Europe compared with last summer (or $1,188 on average). Flights to Asia are up 17 percent (averaging $1,890) compared to last summer; that's 67 percent more than in 2019.

What's a traveler to do to keep from being fleeced? Keep an open mind.

"It's about being flexible on one of the parameters of booking," said Laura Lindsay, a global travel trends expert at Skyscanner, an airfare search site. "If you are flexible on when or where you want to go and even how you want to go, perhaps flying out of one airport and returning to a different one or on a different carrier, there's a deal. If you're rigid, you'll be fenced into a more expensive fare."

When you fly can be easiest to adjust. Skyscanner lets users look at prices for a route within a month's time, letting them find the lowest fares. Google Flights sends price alerts for good fares on any dates on a specified route, and Kayak allows searches using flexible dates.

When it comes to where to go, consider 2023 a summer of spontaneity.

"Let the deal dictate the destination if you can," said Ted Rossman, a senior industry analyst at Bankrate, a personal finance website. "So often people get their hearts set on a place and that limits their options. If you don't care which beach, shop around."

If you haven't booked summer flights, do it now. Hopper generally recommends monitoring domestic fares three to four months in advance of travel — many search engines will track specified routes — and buying one to two months out. In summer, it says the best deals are often available three to four months in advance.

Another potential money saver, a practice called skiplagging, allows fliers to book a ticket with an intermediate stop in their intended destination and then skip the final leg of their trip, which can sometimes be cheaper than flying direct. The website Skiplagged assembles available deals based on your preferred airport. For example, it recently flagged a flight from San Francisco to Jacksonville, Fla., with a stop in Miami for $134. A direct flight between San Francisco and Miami was $158. This method, which the airlines hate, requires fliers to book outbound and return tickets separately and forgo checked bags.

Alternatively, look for airfare and hotel packages assembled for less than the sum of their parts. The online travel agency Priceline said its packages save an average of $240 per booking. JetBlue Vacations, a branch of the airline, said its hotel and airfare deals are better than booking separately 90 percent of the time. Shoppers can use the "Best Vacation Finder" tool to compare offers in a variety of beach destinations, mountain getaways and cities.

Finally, don't overlook points accrued by flying or spending on credit cards as payment.

"It's all the more important now," Mr. Rossman said, noting that many consumers amassed stockpiles of points during the pandemic, caches at risk of devaluation by airlines, which can change the requirements at will, charging 60,000 points for a flight that was 50,000 yesterday. "Providers are recovering from the pandemic, and they want paid customers, not freebies."

LABOR UNREST

Across Europe, workers are staging walkouts and the turmoil will continue all summer.

By CEYLAN YEGINSU

Ongoing labor actions continue to wreak havoc on major European transit hubs and may upend the plans of travelers this summer.

Tens of thousands of flights and trains have been delayed or canceled in recent months as workers across European cities walked out over pay disputes and labor conditions. France and Britain have been hit particularly badly, with prolonged strikes over peak holiday periods.

In part because of the labor actions, flight cancellations in Europe rose by 65 percent in March compared with the previous month, and are expected to rise further as demand increases into the summer season, according to Cirium, an aviation analytics firm.

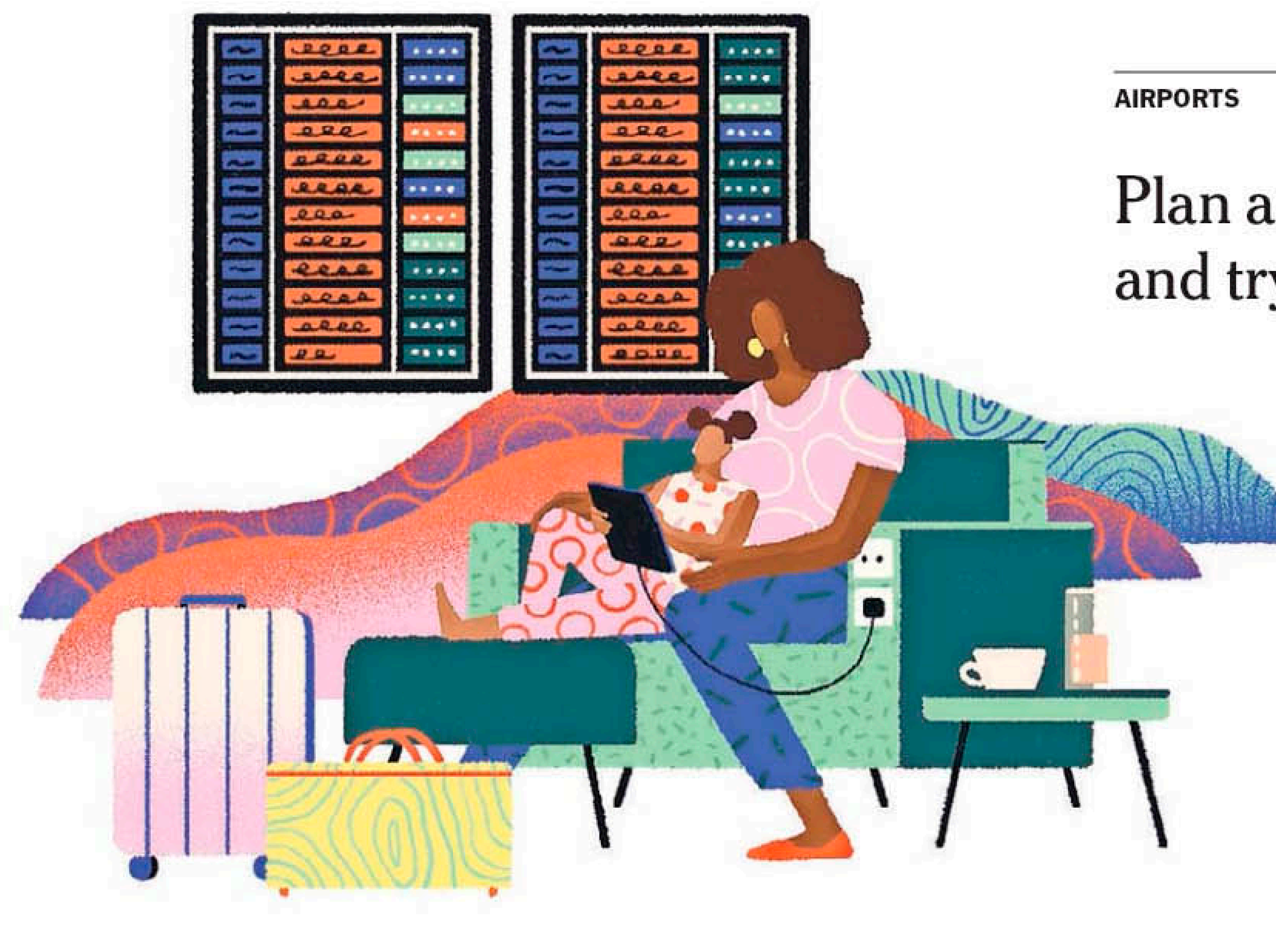
For travelers in the process of booking their summer trips, travel experts advise checking if flights and hotel reservations coincide with planned labor actions. Heathrow Airport in London, where members of security staff have been striking for several days each month, keeps an updated calendar of planned disruptions. In Britain, the national rail service has posted planned train strike dates through June.

In France, unions have been staging nationwide protests against a bill to raise the country's retirement age by two years. Violent clashes have broken out between demonstrators and the police, causing some tourist attractions to close. Air traffic controllers and workers at SNCF, the country's railway operator, have walked out several times this year, and the action is expected to continue.

In Italy, baggage handlers, pilots and flight attendants have been striking regularly over pay; a nationwide strike has been planned for June 4.

The U.S. State Department advises travelers to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program for advisories about labor actions and other events.

Even though the days for planned strikes are known in advance, travel agents are advising clients to budget extra days. Travelers should also know their rights. Under European Union rules, travelers flying into, out of or within the bloc are eligible for a refund or a replacement flight if their flight is canceled or delayed for over three hours.



AIRPORTS

Plan around the peak times for long-haul flights, and try to steer clear of problem destinations.

By SHANNON SIMS

During last summer's travel boom, the chief executive of Heathrow Airport in London asked airlines to stop selling tickets because of staffing shortages. Amsterdam Schiphol set a capacity cap. London Gatwick cut back on flights for July and August. Air Canada reduced its number of flights by about 15 percent.

What should travelers expect for summer 2023? And where are they most likely to run into delays and cancellations?

The flight tracking website FlightAware may offer some clues: Between Memorial Day and Labor Day in 2022, the U.S. airports with the highest number of delays and cancellations, in order, were: Newark Liberty International Airport, La Guardia Airport and Kennedy Airport in New York; Reagan National in Washington; Miami International; Orlando International; Boston Logan International; and Charlotte Douglas International, in Charlotte, N.C.

In Newark and Orlando, the worst for delays last summer, nearly 35 percent of flights departing from those airports didn't arrive at their destinations on time. Newark also held the title for most cancellations last summer, with nearly 9 percent of flights scratched entirely.

Globally, the worst percentage of delays and cancellations, in order, were at the international airports in Toronto, Sydney, Jakarta, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Munich and London (both Gatwick and Heathrow).

Whether these airports will again be the culprits of outsize travel misery is difficult to know. Some are taking preventive measures to try to head off the summer surge.

In the United States, the Federal Aviation Administration published a note saying that there would be increased delays in the Northeast this summer compared with 2022, and so the agency is loosening restrictions on airlines operating in Washington, D.C., and New York to mitigate disruptions.

But there are some strategies that passengers can use to increase the chance of pain-free travel. For one, avoiding the airports with the highest levels of delays and cancellations last summer may be a good idea. And flying nonstop eliminates the risk of something going wrong with the connection.

Passengers can avoid traveling at peak times, such as when long-haul flights arrive, which can cause overcrowding. Most overnight long-haul flights from the United States to Europe arrive at their destination cities between 6 a.m. and noon local time. The Customs and Border Protection wait times website can give a sense of the busiest times for international flights to arrive in the United States, so you can plan ahead.

Booking the first flight of the day can also be a savvy move, because if the flight is canceled, you have a better chance of getting on another flight the same day. Building in some connection cushion time is an easy way to avoid headaches.

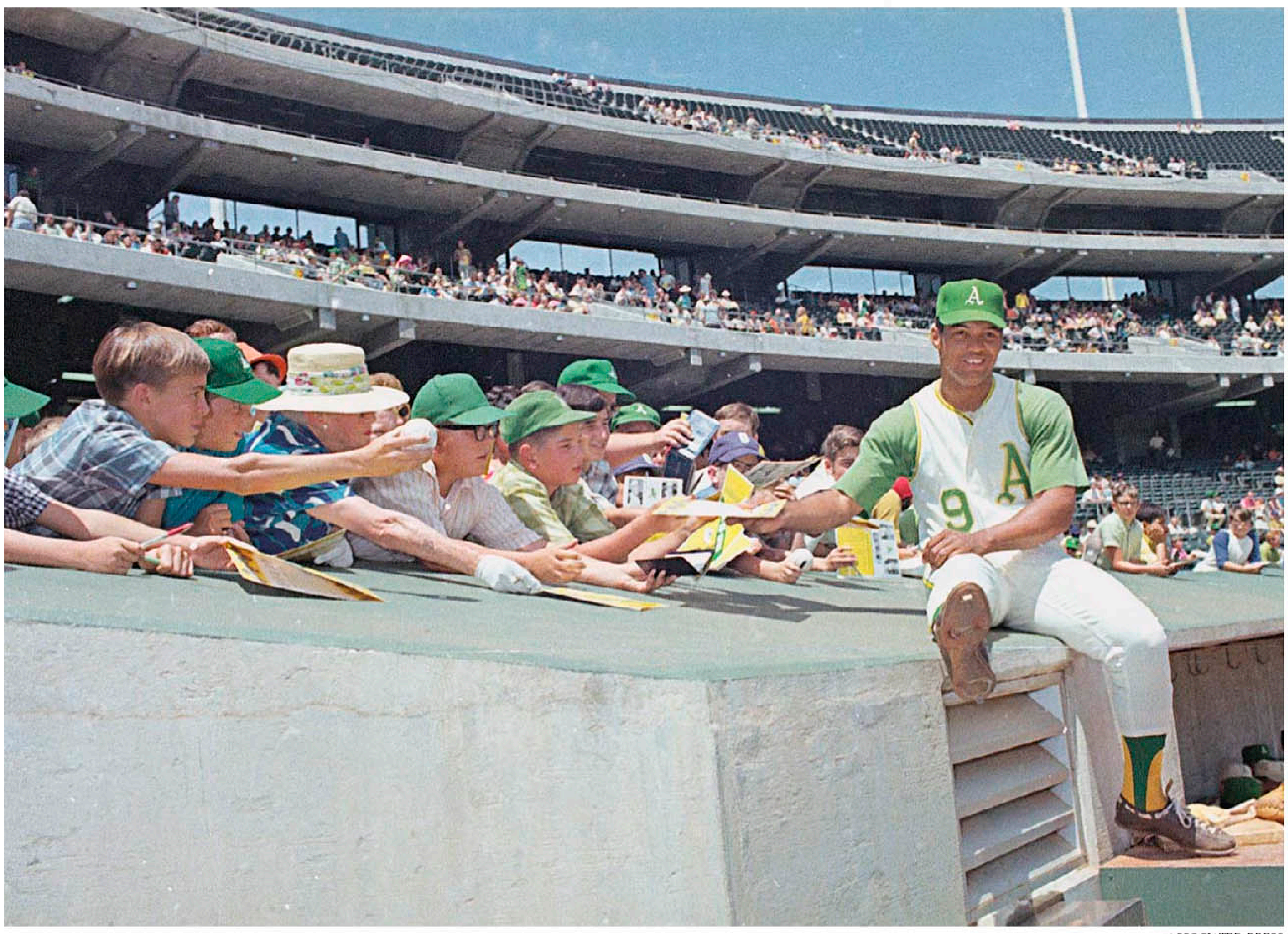
N

Sports
The New York Times

BASEBALL

A Restless Franchise Has Yet Another Stadium Deal

By BENJAMIN HOFFMAN



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Reggie Jackson, left in 1969, and the Oakland A's won the World Series three years in a row in the 1970s.

It was announced this week that the Athletics, at long last, had come to an agreement with a group of politicians to build a new stadium for the club, which has been stuck in an outdated facility for years.

If that sounds familiar, it is because the same situation, with the same reasoning, has been playing out for more than 100 years. The Athletics, a vagabond franchise that was born in Philadelphia before moving to Kansas City, Mo., and then Oakland, Calif., have never seemed content with where they were.

From a stadium limited by prohibitive blue laws in Philadelphia to a hastily rebuilt minor league park in Kansas City to a Brutalist concrete palace in Oakland, they have always had their eye out for something better. They explored Denver, they poked at San Jose and Fremont, they had multiple sites picked out in Oakland. But now, in an agreement announced by Nevada's governor that still faces several hurdles, they want to build a stadium on the Las Vegas Strip that would theoretically be ready for the 2027 season.

It is a situation causing optimism in Vegas, heartbreak in Oakland and undoubtedly some eye-rolling everywhere else. The A's, with nine World Series titles and 17 100-loss seasons, have seemingly been on the verge of a move for most of their existence.

"It's possible that a relocation vote could happen as early as June," Commissioner Rob Manfred told reporters on Thursday when asked about the Las Vegas deal. But in keeping with how far the plan has to go, and how much it has already changed in the last few weeks, he cited a previous location for the stadium, rather than the team's current plan to build on the site of the Tropicana Las Vegas.

The team's reputation for restlessness is earned. The Athletics are tied with the Braves (Boston, Milwaukee and Atlanta) and the Orioles (Milwaukee, St. Louis and Baltimore) for the most traveled franchises. But in a strange enough quirk, the A's have had only four stadiums in their 123 seasons of play — fewer than all but a handful of teams.

Unfortunately for the A's, none of their four parks would be confused with a classic like Boston's Fenway Park or a modern marvel like the Rangers' Globe Life Field.

A look at those four stadiums makes it clear why A's have had a perpetual wandering eye.

Columbia Park 1901-1908

The Times

NUMBER 9337. PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 27, 1901. ONE CENT.

FAMILY LIVED FOR TWO YEARS BY FRAUD

Career in This City of Mrs. MacCarton and Her Children Reads Like a Romance.

Victimized Tailors, Jewelers, Grocers, Florists, Liverymen and Others to the Extent of $15,000.

Often Starved for Days at a Time and Children Sold Flowers to Get Money.

UNKNOWN OFFERS TO INFORM POLICE WHO SHOT STOVER

In an Anonymous Letter He Asks for Reward and Immunity From Arrest.

POLICE WORK ON THE CLUE

Writer Says Shooter Was Trying to Break Pitcher Which Stover Was Carrying.

LOCAL AMERICAN LEAGUE TEAM LOST FIRST GAME

CROWD LINED AROUND THE DIAMOND AT COLUMBIA PARK

Athletics Fall Victims to Washington Through Errors and Weakness at the Bat—Fifteen Thousand Spectators Bid Glorious Welcome to Rival League

THE WEATHER

Men's Spring Suits

THE PHILADELPHIA TIMES

WORLD SERIES TITLES
0

TOP PLAYER
Eddie Plank, pitcher
51 wins above replacement

The Philadelphia Times reported a crowd of 15,000 at the Athletics' first game. Many were outside the stadium.

Built for a new team in a new league in which no one knew what to expect, Columbia Park was immediately too small. It had a capacity of 9,500, although more people watched from nearby rooftops. The team tinkered with it, but even at its peak it held fewer than 14,000 fans.

The stadium's most notable moment, at least in terms of absurdity, came in the 1905 World Series when Connie Mack's Athletics and John McGraw's New York Giants conspired to fake a rainout to avoid playing to a sparse crowd.

As recounted in The New York Times, Game 3 was scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 11, but with a crowd of around 4,000 people, and pay for the clubs being entirely dependent on ticket sales, the managers agreed to pretend that a light drizzle earlier in the day had made the field unplayable.

Sammy Strang, a utility player for the Giants, helped sell the ruse, with The Times saying, "A typical pantomime was that of Strang, who jumped under the stand, and, looking to the sky, stretched forth his arms and beckoned to the moisture to let itself fall."

The gambit worked. The teams played Game 3 the next day, with a reported crowd of 10,991 that nearly tripled Wednesday's gate.

The Athletics played on at Columbia for three forgettable years. Within a decade of them leaving, the stadium was torn down and replaced with housing.

Shibe Park 1909-1954

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WORLD SERIES TITLES
5

TOP PLAYER
Lefty Grove, pitcher
68.4 WAR

In October 1929, fans paid $5 to watch the Philadelphia Athletics from houses across from Shibe Park.

Hoping to capitalize on his team's popularity, Charles Shibe, the primary owner of the Athletics, built baseball's first steel-and-concrete stadium, beating Fenway Park by three seasons and Wrigley Field by five. The decision paid off, with The Times reporting that Philadelphia's first game of the 1909 season was attended by a record 30,162 fans. The Athletics led the A.L. in attendance for three straight years.

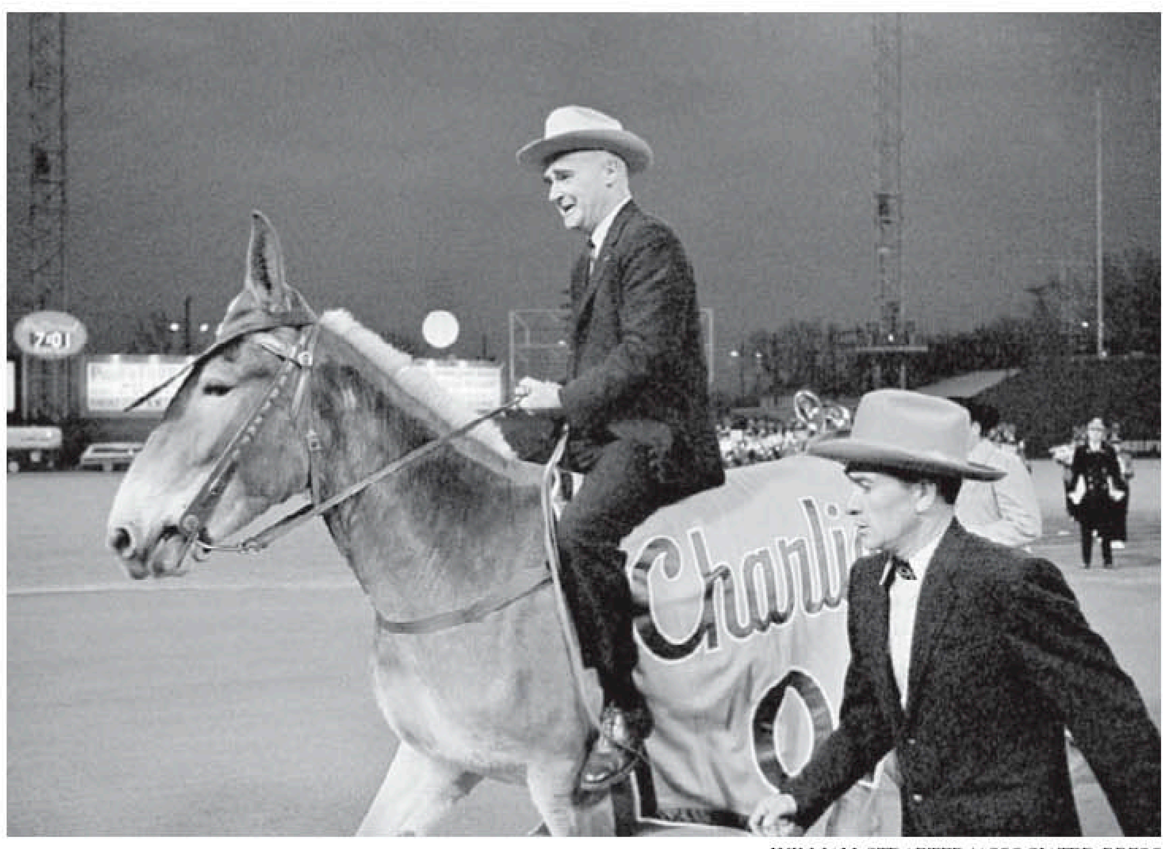
Shibe Park was home to some great teams, with the Athletics winning nine pennants and five World Series titles there, but ownership routinely cited the state's restrictive blue laws for limiting their ability to play home games on Sundays, putting the club at a disadvantage to other teams. The team, desperate to raise money, also alienated fans by blocking the nearby rooftop bleachers with a 34-foot wall that was nicknamed Connie Mack's Spite Fence.

As Shibe Park started to wear down, the Athletics never recovered from selling off the 1930 champions. They finished in last or second-to-last place 14 times in a 20-season period from 1935 to 1954, drawing only 304,666 fans in their last season in Philadelphia — fewer than they had in all but one of their seasons at tiny Columbia Park.

A fire was set in the stadium in 1971, destroying most of it. "Fire ravaged Connie Mack Stadium the other day," Arthur Daley wrote in The Times, referring to Shibe under the name it used in its later years. "If nothing else, it lit some pleasant memories."

The stadium's famous corner tower, with Mack's original office, was demolished in 1976. A church built a sanctuary on the site.

Municipal Stadium 1955-1967



WILLIAM STRAETER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

WORLD SERIES TITLES
0

TOP PLAYER
Ed Charles, third base
14.4 WAR

Charles O. Finley astride the team mascot at ceremonies before the 1965 home opener in Kansas City.

George E. Muehlebach deserves some credit for predicting that the stadium he built in 1923 for his minor league team, the Kansas City Blues, might one day be the home of a major league squad. In fact, it was all along: the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro leagues were tenants of the stadium. But with his eyes on a National or American League team, Muehlebach designed the stadium with large footings to allow for expansion. Unfortunately, when Arnold Johnson purchased the Athletics and moved the team to Kansas City in 1955, it was found that the footings, and nearly the entire stadium, needed to be rebuilt.

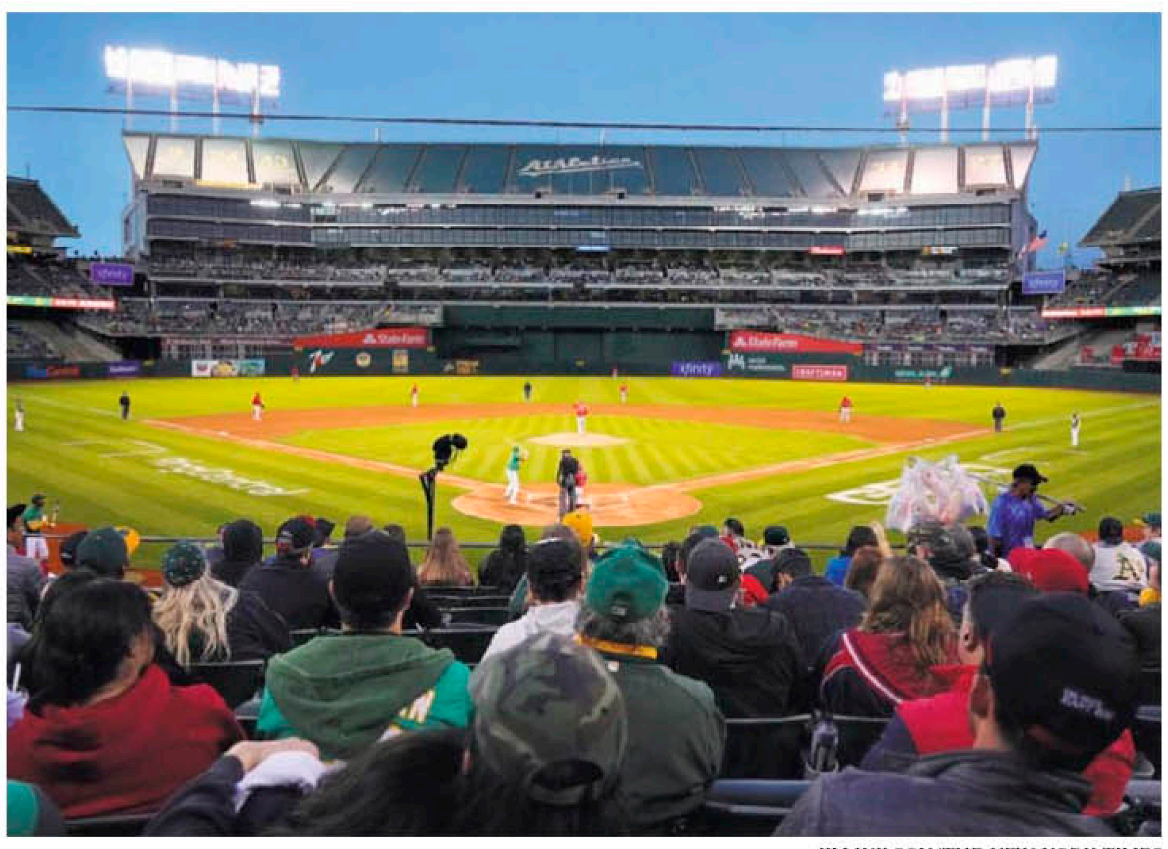
Cost overruns resulted in the stadium's capacity being far lower than expected, and the park was barely ready when the season began.

The A's finished sixth in their first season in Missouri and wouldn't get that high again, ending their 13-season run there with a record of 829-1,224 and no postseason appearances. Attendance at Municipal Stadium was in the A.L.'s bottom three in all but one of the team's seasons.

It wasn't all bad. Charles O. Finley bought the team in 1960 and, amid various shenanigans, he presided over an incredible accumulation of talent, with the Hall of Famers Reggie Jackson and Catfish Hunter beginning their careers in Kansas City.

The stadium was demolished in 1976. A garden with a plaque sits on the old site, surrounded by a housing development.

Oakland Coliseum 1968-Present



JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

WORLD SERIES TITLES
4

TOP PLAYER
Rickey Henderson, left field
72.7 WAR

With the A's eager to abandon Oakland and the team floundering, fans have been staying away this season.

Built in the multipurpose stadium craze of the 1960s, Oakland Coliseum was quirky from the start.

Its circular design gave the Coliseum by far the most foul territory in baseball. It was dug into a hill, putting its playing surface 21 feet below sea level. Feral cats, leaking sewage and a possum that lives in one of the television booths wouldn't come along until later.

The A's had multiple eras of dominance in the park, winning three straight World Series titles in the 1970s and going to the Series in three straight years from 1988 to 1990 (winning once), but attendance varied wildly, dropping as low as 306,763 (3,787 per game) in 1979 and reaching a peak of 2.9 million (35,805 per game) in 1990.

Unpopular changes to the stadium at the behest of the Oakland Raiders of the N.F.L. made a boring stadium incongruous and ugly. Maintenance of the park became unmanageable, and the team's various owners consistently complained about the lack of amenities.

An aggressive sell-off of promising players over the last few years, combined with the team's obvious preference for Las Vegas, resulted in a huge fan backlash.

The team averaged only 9,849 fans a game last season, and things are even worse this year, at 8,695. It doesn't help that the team, at 10-42 through Thursday, was on pace for the worst record of baseball's modern era.

With the Raiders already having left for Las Vegas, the Golden State Warriors having moved to San Francisco and the A's lease expiring after the 2024 season, the Coliseum complex may soon have no permanent tenants. It would then very likely be consigned to a fate like that of the Athletics' three previous parks, none of which left more than a plaque to remember the A's by.

PRO BASKETBALL | N.B.A. PLAYOFFS

Celtics' Sparkplug Helps Team Forgo Foregone Conclusion

SCOTT CACCIOLA

ON PRO BASKETBALL

Boston Celtics guard Marcus Smart is difficult to miss. His jump shot can be an amusement-park ride. He will try the occasional alley-oop pass from midcourt. He spoke this month about the apparent brutality of a playoff game as a "true dogfight — scratching and clawing, biting, blood, everything." He dyes his hair green.

It is all part of the colorful package, and on Thursday night, Smart showcased his role as a defense-minded agent of chaos on the opening possession of Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals against the Miami Heat.

Smart was defending Jimmy Butler away from the ball, near the top of the perimeter, when Bam Adebayo of the Heat drove to the basket. Smart reached at the ball, stripped it free and dove to collect it near the foul line before shoveling it ahead to Jayson Tatum for a fast-break layup and the game's first points.

One play does not define anything, of course, especially in a postseason series. But that play — a clean steal before the Heat could even take a shot — seemed to hint at everything that was to come during the Celtics' 110-97 victory, which extended their season. The Heat lead the series, 3-2. Game 6 is Saturday evening in Miami.

The Celtics, the No. 2 seed in the East, forced 16 turnovers in Game 5. They threw a full-court press at the Heat coming out of timeouts. They led by as many as 24 points. By the fourth quarter, Heat Coach Erik Spoelstra was pacing in front of the visiting bench with his hands on his hips, and Butler, who finished with just 14 points against a host of defenders, looked weary.

"I wanted to get us going," said Smart, who checked out of the game to an ovation after scoring 23 points. "I wanted to come in and give my team some energy, especially going against a team like Miami."

He added: "We did the knocking around tonight."

The pressure is squarely on the Heat before Game 6. They would certainly welcome the return of Gabe Vincent, their starting point guard, who missed Game 5 with a sprained ankle. But in case anyone thinks they are reeling, Butler offered a Namath-esque guarantee at his postgame news conference.

"We can and we will win this series," he said. "We'll just have to close it out at home."

Not so long ago, the Heat had all the momentum. In fact, early in the third quarter of Game 4 on Tuesday, they seemed to be closing in on a four-game series sweep. There was one possession in that game when three offensive rebounds led to a 3-pointer by Max Strus, pushing Miami's lead to 9 points in front of a home crowd that was primed to celebrate a trip to the N.B.A. finals.

The Celtics could have crumbled like a sand castle into Biscayne Bay. But a funny thing happened: They promptly went on an 18-0 run. No longer was the Heat's zone defense such a riddle. No longer were the Celtics' 3-point shots rimming in and out. And no longer did the outcome of the series appear to be a foregone conclusion after the Celtics' 116-99 victory, which sent it back to Boston.

Several Celtics mentioned the importance of a team meeting between Games 3 and 4, which happened at a time when nearly everyone outside their locker room figured their season was toast. Coach Joe Mazzulla was fielding questions about whether he had lost his team. Tatum and Jaylen Brown were being scrutinized for their inconsistent play. Broadcasters were cracking jokes about imminent trips to Cancun.

"I mean, Game 3, that was as low as you can be," Tatum said. "The good part about being that low is that you only can play better. It's only up from there."

After Thursday's win, Mazzulla said one of his assistants had provided valuable perspective.

"The seasons are, like, nine months long, and we just had a bad week," Mazzulla said. "Sometimes you have a bad week at work. We obviously didn't pick the best time to have a bad week, but we did, and we're sticking together and fighting like hell to keep it alive, and the guys are really coming together."

The Celtics are making a habit of digging holes — they trailed the Philadelphia 76ers, three games to two, in their conference semifinal series — before MacGyvering their way out. Smart acknowledged that the Celtics may have been too lax in how they had approached their series with the eighth-seeded Heat.

"They snuck up on us and got us," said Smart, who was asked to elaborate. "That's the thing about sneaking up on somebody: They're not supposed to know you're coming. So that's what happened. We didn't know. We didn't see it, and they got us. It wasn't like we were trying to have that mind-set. It's part of the game. It's part of life. It's part of the roller coaster of playing in the N.B.A."

Now, the Celtics are halfway toward snapping one of professional sports' most curious and seemingly shatterproof streaks. No N.B.A. team has ever come back from a 3-0 series deficit. Earlier this week, the Los Angeles Lakers became the 150th team to have tried (briefly) and failed (miserably) when the Denver Nuggets swept them in the Western Conference finals.

As for the Celtics, Smart pumped the brakes on looking beyond Game 6.

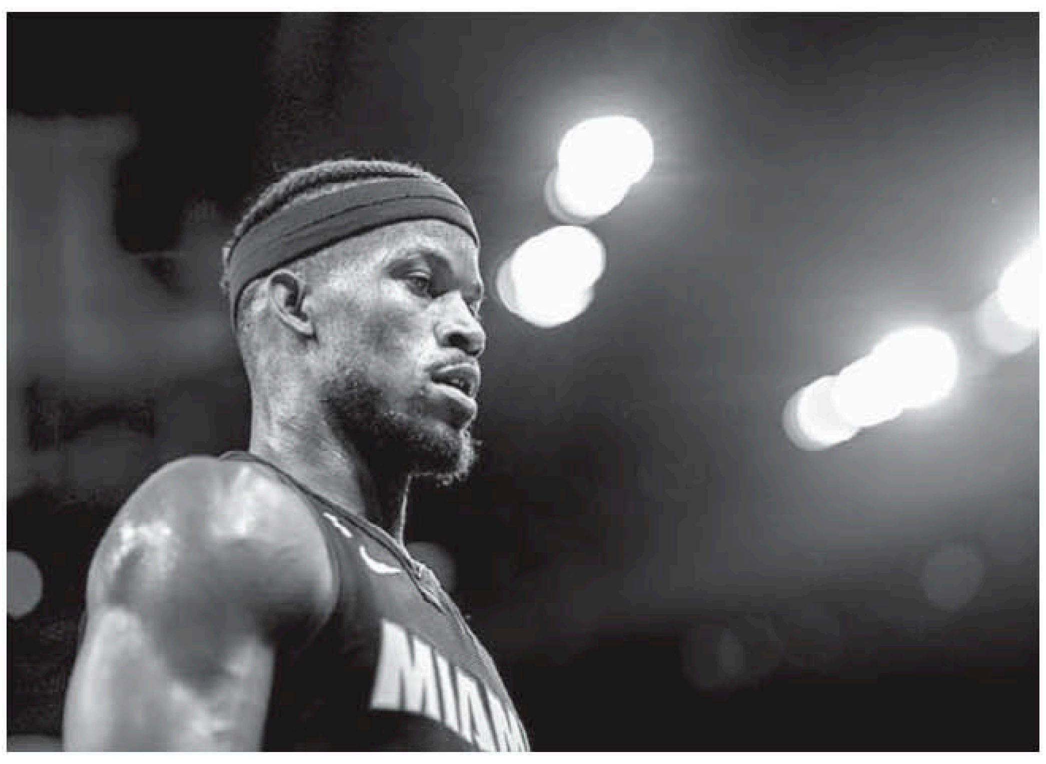
"First of all, we have to worry about one — the next game, not two games," he said.

On Thursday, Smart was a kinetic force. He connected on back-to-back 3-pointers for an early 10-point lead. He started the first half with a steal and punctuated it with one, too, poking the ball away from the Heat's Caleb Martin. He defended and scored, grimaced and scowled, finishing with five steals while shooting 7 of 12 from the field and 4 of 6 from 3-point range.

"He's just an emotional key for us," Mazzulla said. "When he's locked in and playing both sides of the ball at a different pace, it kind of gives us our identity and our life."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE MEYER/GETTY IMAGES

From left, Marcus Smart, Derrick White and Jayson Tatum led a Celtics romp in Game 5, sending the series back to Miami.



The Heat's Jimmy Butler, held to 14 points by a platoon of defenders in Game 5, later said, "We can and will win this series."

Smart's customary zealous defense, producing five steals, was coupled in Game 5 by uncharacteristic 3-point marksmanship.

James May Be Asking for a Quick Fix, but Those Often Fail

TANIA GANGULI

ON PRO BASKETBALL

The day after the Los Angeles Lakers' season ended in a sweep, General Manager Rob Pelinka told reporters that the team intended to "keep our core of young guys together."

This quote did not escape the notice of Washington Wizards forward Kyle Kuzma, whom the Lakers drafted in 2017.

"Heard that before," Kuzma wrote on Twitter on Tuesday, adding four crying emojis to the post.

Kuzma started his N.B.A. career with the Lakers, playing alongside the lottery picks Lonzo Ball, Julius Randle and Brandon Ingram, as well as a number of other young players who went on to play important roles on other teams.

All of them were shipped out or let go in service of acquiring star players who the Lakers hoped could deliver immediate championships. In July 2019, after the Lakers missed the playoffs, Kuzma survived the Anthony Davis trade, which sent Ball, Ingram and Josh Hart to the New Orleans Pelicans for Davis. The Lakers won a championship the next season. But a year later, after losing in the first round of the playoffs, the Lakers traded Kuzma to Washington as part of a deal for Russell Westbrook, hoping he could help them win their next championship.

Heading into this off-season, the Lakers are confronted with the question of whether they can or should be patient. On one hand, they were just swept in the Western Conference finals by a Denver team that showed how steady building can pay off. On the other hand, the Lakers are driven by LeBron James, 38, who wants to win now.

It is a tension that will tug at the Lakers as they decide what's next.

"We're incredibly proud of this group, obviously, to get to the Western Conference finals," Pelinka said Tuesday at a season-ending news conference where he said the team's goal was always to work toward a championship. "After the trade deadline we had one of the top records in the league. Keeping that continuity is going to be very important. We ultimately got knocked out by a team that has great continuity."

The Lakers have had a lot of turnover in recent years, but their performance this year showed that they might have a foundation on which to build. Darvin Ham, their first-year head coach, began to find rotations that worked, which helped the Lakers go from the worst record in the N.B.A. to the conference finals.

"It's just been a hell of a year," Ham said. He mentioned having the support of Pelinka and the Lakers owner Jeanie Buss, then added: "To go through some of those tough times early, you know, we don't get that support, we probably don't make it to this point."

Their roster has promise. After the trade deadline, the Lakers competed well, though they had little time to jell. Guard Austin Reaves was a great fit beside James and Davis, and Rui Hachimura, acquired via trade in January, provided needed offensive bursts. Dennis Schröder was critical defensively. Lonnie Walker, Jarred Vanderbilt and D'Angelo Russell also had moments of success in the postseason. Walker, for example, saved the Lakers with a 15-point fourth quarter against Golden State in Game 4 of the second round.

The Lakers were not built around youth this season, so it takes a little guessing to figure out what Pelinka means by the team's "young core." But Reaves is most likely a key part of that.

Reaves and Hachimura are restricted free agents this year; Russell, Walker and Schröder are unrestricted free agents.

"We don't know what team we have next year," Davis said. "But whatever it is, whoever we have coming to training camp with the mind-set of building that chemistry, building that foundation, me and LeBron setting the tone, trying to get back here and further."

Because of the little time they have spent together, it's hard to say how much further they could get.

When James joined the Lakers as a free agent in 2018, some of his teammates were closer to his oldest son's age than his. He said he knew being part of that team would require patience, and he said he was prepared to wait. But it quickly became clear he didn't enjoy the interim.

The Lakers missed the playoffs that 2018-19 season, in part because of serious injuries to James and Ball. Midway through the season, James began hinting that he wanted the Lakers to get Davis from the Pelicans. That summer, the Lakers completed the trade.

"Yeah," James told The Los Angeles Times when asked if he was glad he wouldn't have to be patient anymore. "Because I was patient last year, and you see where it got me."

He showed a bit of that same impatience on Monday after the Nuggets clinched their series, saying he doesn't "play for anything besides winning championships at this point in my career."

James hinted at retirement after 20 seasons.

"We'll see what happens going forward," James said. "I don't know. I don't know. I've got a lot to think about, to be honest. I've got a lot to think about, to be honest. Just for me personally, going forward with the game of basketball, I've got a lot to think about."

Later, he explicitly told ESPN and Bleacher Report that he was considering retiring.

"LeBron has given as much to the game of basketball as anyone that's ever played," Pelinka said. "When you do that you earn a right to decide whether you're going to give more."

Some saw James's remarks as a sign that he was worn out from the past four months, when he gave a herculean effort to play through a torn tendon in his foot, or that perhaps his friend Carmelo Anthony announcing his retirement this week made him wonder if he should, too.

It was also possible he was trying to pressure the Lakers to get him a roster that could win a championship next year — perhaps by finding a way to acquire his former teammate Kyrie Irving, a controversy-plagued point guard who attended Game 4 of the Western Conference finals, despite restrictive new salary cap rules. Irving is phenomenally talented, but he has struggled to make a difference on teams since he helped James win a championship in Cleveland in 2016.

The Lakers aren't as used to delayed gratification as most other teams. The wait between acquiring a major star to win and winning has not been long when it has worked.

The Lakers drafted Magic Johnson with the No. 1 overall pick in 1979 and won a championship his rookie season, then four more over the next decade.

It took a few years longer for the payoff from their key signings in the summer of 1996 — Shaquille O'Neal (free agent) and Kobe Bryant (post-draft deal) — but they never missed the playoffs before winning three championships in a row.

They added Pau Gasol to Bryant's team in February 2008, lost in the N.B.A. finals four months later, then won back-to-back championships.

And Davis, like Johnson, helped the Lakers win a championship right away. It was only James's second year in Los Angeles.

Conversely, the Nuggets have spent years constructing this team.

They waited while their point guard Jamal Murray tackled the long recovery that comes with an anterior cruciate ligament tear. Murray's injury came in April 2021, after the Nuggets had built a roster that seemed capable of winning a championship. His recovery has delayed that timeline.

They could afford to wait since their top star, Nikola Jokic, is still in his 20s.

The reward for their patience is a team that has looked serene in challenging moments, whose players mesh with each other completely. This season's newcomers understood the culture right away.

But James is 10 years older than Jokic, and that provides a unique challenge. No star has ever played as well as he has at his age. He may not be at his own peak, but he is still one of the best players in the game. The night Denver ended his season, he had 40 points — more than anyone on either team.

James doesn't want to wait, but quick fixes don't always work; see the trade for Westbrook that sent Kuzma to Washington. The Lakers missed the playoffs in Westbrook's first season, then traded him away this season for young players who helped but couldn't win it all.

Based on what the Lakers established this year, they would not be starting from scratch if they chose to stay on their current path. But it could take more time than James has left.

HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

In a season-ending loss on Monday, LeBron James scored 40 points and then hinted at retirement.

INA FASSBENDER/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Dortmund is expected to sell the English midfielder Jude Bellingham, the most coveted player in Europe, this summer.

MATTHIAS HANGST/GETTY IMAGES

The Bayern brain trust at a match in Munich last week. Their team has won the Bundesliga title 10 years in a row.

INA FASSBENDER/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Dortmund's players after a goal by Sébastian Haller during a 5-2 victory over Borussia Möenchengladbach on May 13.

ALEX GRIMM/GETTY IMAGES

Fans of Borussia Dortmund after the team's victory on Sunday at Augsburg. If Dortmund defeats Mainz on Saturday, it will win its first Bundesliga title since 2012, snapping Bayern's epic streak.

Chance of a Lifetime, or at Least of a Decade, in the Bundesliga

RORY SMITH

ON SOCCER

The requests had started to flow almost as soon as the final whistle blew last Sunday. All through Monday, they came in great torrents to members of the Borussia Dortmund staff, to the club's executives, to the players themselves. They came from family, of course, and from friends, and from friends of friends, and acquaintances and colleagues and that guy you met in that restaurant.

Pretty quickly, Dortmund officials realized the club had to do something or, in a week when nothing is quite so precious as serenity, the situation risked spiraling into a source of stress. The team called the players together and advised them to get all their ticket requests in by the end of Tuesday, and allow the executives to take care of everything from there. After that, nobody else would be able to come to the place where everyone wanted to be.

That knowledge, they hoped, would allow the players to focus on the task at hand. Officially, there will be 81,365 people inside Signal Iduna Park on Saturday to watch Dortmund play Mainz in the final game of the season, but demand has been so high that Sebastian Kehl, Dortmund's sporting director, was probably exaggerating only a little when he said it could have sold "half a million tickets."

Those in attendance will cherish the rare, beautiful simplicity of the equation. If Dortmund wins, it will be the champion of Germany for the first time since 2012: The length of the waiting list is reflective of the length of the wait. "There is no better place to celebrate winning something than Dortmund," Kehl said. He should know: He was a player at the club the last time it claimed the title.

Dortmund's triumph, though, would not just be a cause of jubilation in the city itself. No team other than Bayern Munich has lifted the German championship in the past decade; every spring since Dortmund's last win, the title has headed without fail to Allianz Arena. With a few notable exceptions — Schalke, Dortmund's fierce rival, in particular — German soccer as a whole will toast the breaking of that stranglehold.

"It is not to say anything against Bayern, because they work pretty hard and perhaps they deserved to be champion in the last 10 years," Kehl said. "But of course it is good for everyone that the competition in our league is still there, and that maybe on Saturday there is a different champion."

Until relatively recently, this season did not look especially likely to end that way. Dortmund had sold Erling Haaland last summer, a year after losing Jadon Sancho. Once again, the model that had made the club such a financial success — buying bright young talent and selling it at a vast profit — would hold it back on the field.

When the Bundesliga broke for the World Cup in November, Dortmund was adrift in sixth place, and Bayern appeared to be set to overtake Union Berlin and Freiburg — the two improbable early pacesetters — to take its 11th consecutive title. That seeming inevitability would further compound the impression that the Bundesliga had become little more than Bayern's private fief.

Dortmund improved, markedly, in January and February — winning nine games in a row to move into Bayern's slipstream — but when the teams met on April 1, Bayern swatted aside its challenger. "The stories were already done," Kehl said. "That once again it was Bayern Munich that destroyed our dream."

In the weeks since, the temptation has been to ascribe the drastic swing in the clubs' fortunes more to Bayern's missteps than to Dortmund's merits. Dismissing Julian Nagelsmann and appointing Thomas Tuchel has backfired on Bayern, laying bare the flaws in its squad planning. Civil war, as it tends to do in the face of disappointment, is brewing in Munich.

But to attribute agency only to Bayern ignores the fact that something has changed in Dortmund, too. It has, for 10 years, generally been Bayern's closest contender, its successor-in-waiting, the team that would benefit from any slip-up. The difference this year is not that Bayern has erred — it has done that every so often — but that Dortmund has been able to take advantage.

Manager Edin Terzic deserves credit for that, and so do his players. "If you'd seen the coach after the game in Munich, or the squad, you would know that we still believed we could win it," Kehl said.

But it is testament, too, to a slight change in focus in Dortmund's approach. The club invested not only in promise last summer, as it always does, but in the likes of Sébastian Haller, Niklas Süle and Salih Ozcan, too — players with just a little more experience, a touch more grit, veterans who saw the club not as a showroom but as the ultimate stage.

It is that blend that has enabled Dortmund to stay the course, to cling on and now to take advantage. It is that blend that, in Kehl's eyes, will kick-start a virtuous circle. Dortmund will sell again this summer — not least Jude Bellingham, the most coveted player in Europe — but the proposition it can offer to reinforcements and replacements is now more convincing than ever.

"It shows that we do not just develop players, produce high potential, but we can also win trophies," Kehl said. "We want to be ambitious, but at some point you have to deliver. The capacity to win titles is massively important for me as a sporting director, to bring players to Dortmund, to convince their families, their agents, the players themselves."

That, in turn, will allow Dortmund to keep Bayern within its sights. "I am optimistic that we can now be much closer," Kehl said. "That Bayern will not be so clearly champion all the time."

And that would be something for everyone to celebrate, not just those fortunate enough to have tickets for Signal Iduna Park on Saturday. Dortmund would not be the only unexpected champion in Europe this season: Napoli ended a 33-year wait for a title in Italy; Feyenoord swept past Ajax (and PSV Eindhoven) to win the league in the Netherlands.

Both of those titles were greeted with a fervor, a euphoria that seeing another trophy added to an ever-growing pile could not possibly match. Dortmund, come Saturday evening, hopes to be in a position to do the same. Everyone wants to be there, to be part of the celebrations, because they know, deep down, that these things do not happen every day.

The Job of Antiracism

Carlo Ancelotti did all the right things in the moment, and then, in its aftermath. He said all the right things, too. All, that is, except the one that might actually have made a difference.

After 70 minutes of Real Madrid's defeat in Valencia last week, Vinícius Júnior — certainly Real Madrid's best player, and quite possibly the finest talent in La Liga — approached the referee and pointed out a handful of the members of the home crowd who were clearly and audibly racially abusing him, and had been for some time.

The referee, as dictated by Spanish soccer's antiracism protocols, ordered an announcement to be made to the crowd, warning that the game would be terminated if the abuse continued. Ancelotti, an astute, caring and principled sort of a coach, asked Vinícius if he felt he could continue.

The Brazilian said he did. The game duly resumed, though only as a prelude to what came afterward. Real Madrid described the abuse, correctly, as a hate crime. Vinícius, clearly at his limit, having faced this kind of invective repeatedly in recent months, said that "La Liga belongs to racists." His teammates, like his coach, offered him their resolute support. Javier Tebas, the league's president, for some reason chose to pick a fight with Vinícius on social media, before hurriedly backtracking.

The whole episode raises countless questions, though at least some of them have obvious answers. Does Spanish soccer take racism seriously enough? (No.) Are its protocols up to the job? (No.) Is Tebas's position untenable? (Yes.) Is Valencia's punishment, in the form of a moderate fine and a partial stadium closure, sufficient? (Obviously not.)

One question that did not feature quite so much as it should have is why the decision as to whether the game should continue fell on Vinícius. Ancelotti felt the game should have been abandoned. Thibaut Courtois, the Real Madrid goalkeeper, hinted afterward that he was of the same mind. So why didn't either of them walk off? Or the rest of the team? Or, more powerful still, why didn't Valencia's players?

Ancelotti, doubtless, checked in on Vinícius's state of mind with the best intentions. But he placed Vinícius in an invidious position, too, where his only two choices were to play on — and expose himself to the possibility of more abuse — or walk off, which may well have felt like giving in to the racists.

Ideally, of course, this is a stain on Spanish soccer that the authorities would handle. Clubs and fans would know, in no uncertain terms, that racist abuse would be met with the most severe sanctions: docked points, games forfeited, fixtures voided. Until that happens, sadly, the burden of objection falls on the players. All the players, that is. Not just some of them.

PABLO MORANO/REUTERS

Vinícius Júnior, with Real Madrid Coach Carlo Ancelotti in Valencia on Sunday, was subjected to racial abuse from the crowd.

Chief soccer correspondent Rory Smith takes you from the biggest matches to the smallest leagues, covering the tactics, history and personalities of the world's most popular sport. Sign up for his newsletter at nytimes.com/rory.

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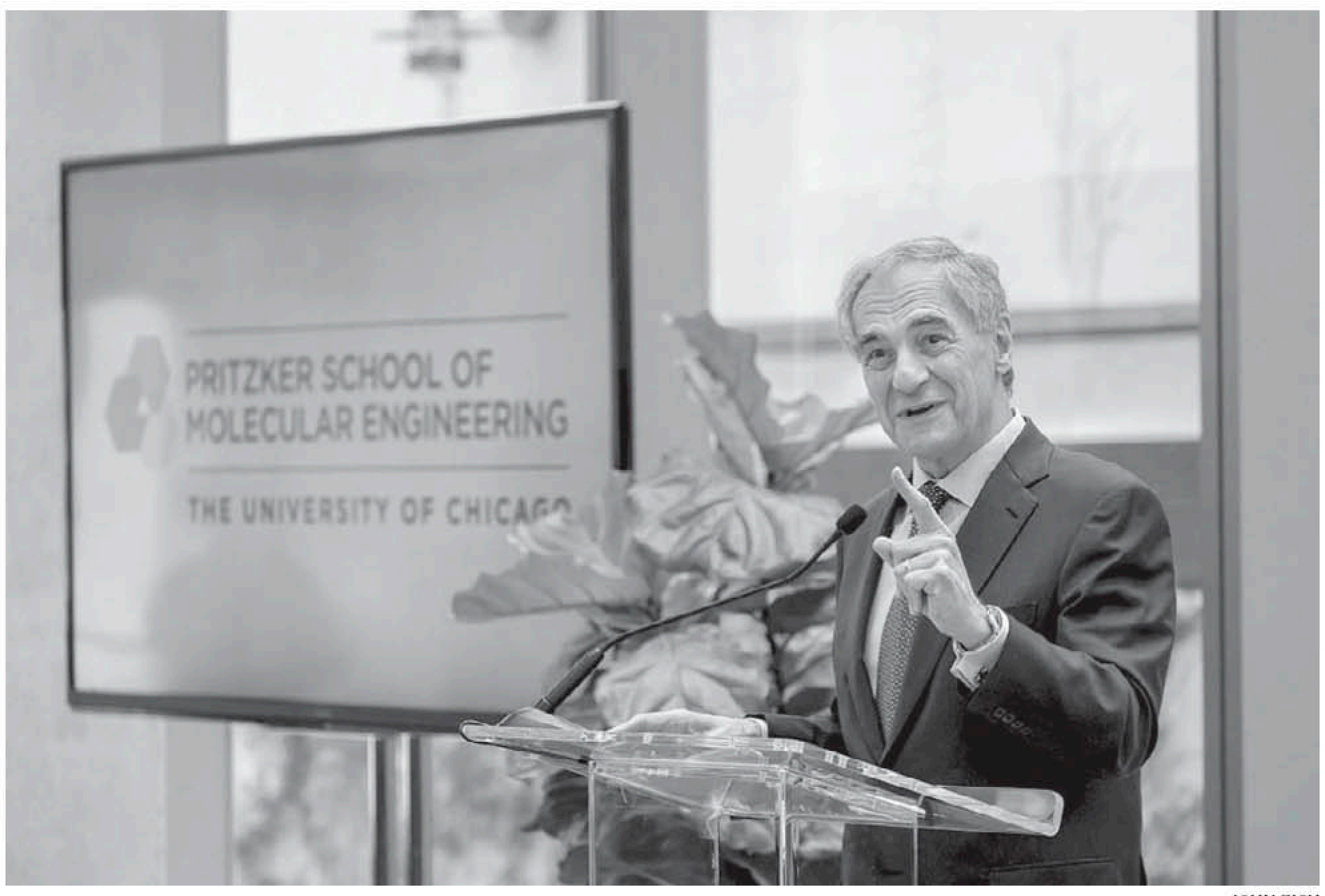
Robert J. Zimmer, 75, Who Protected Free Speech on Campus, Dies

By SAM ROBERTS



JOHN ZICH

Robert J. Zimmer in 2019. He was a prodigious fund-raiser for the University of Chicago.

Robert J. Zimmer, a mathematician who as president of the University of Chicago championed diversity not only quantitatively, in the recruitment of students and faculty, but also by protecting free expression on campus with a protocol that was later embraced by dozens of colleges across the country, died on Tuesday at his home in Chicago. He was 75.

His wife, Shadi Bartsch-Zimmer, a classics professor at the university, said the cause was glioblastoma multiforme, a virulent form of brain cancer.

Mr. Zimmer, who presided over the university from 2006 to 2021, was instrumental in shepherding what became known as the Chicago Principles, a set of guidelines recommended by the Committee on Free Expression, a faculty group he appointed in 2014.

Those guidelines have become a bulwark against what critics perceive as the stifling of academic freedom by colleges where students are able to insulate themselves against discomforting viewpoints — practices that are often lumped together as "cancel culture."

"Concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community," the faculty committee concluded.

In August 2016, during Mr. Zimmer's presidency, the university informed incoming freshmen: "We do not support so-called trigger warnings, we do not cancel invited speakers because their topics might prove controversial, and we do not condone the creation of intellectual safe spaces where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own."

Some campus critics suggested that Mr. Zimmer was motivated by complaints from conservative alumni. But, he told The Wall Street Journal, in responding to a national trend, he was upholding the university's traditional values.

"What you're seeing is a kind of drift of discourse," he said. "You see actions by a lot of people which seem to indicate that they feel that they can, in fact, legitimately stifle the expression of others whose views they fundamentally disagree with."

Daniel Diermeier, who was the university's provost when Mr. Zimmer was its president and is now the chancellor of Vanderbilt University, said in an email: "Whether controversies over speakers, policies on disruptive conduct or his refusal to use the endowment for political purposes,

A mathematician who argued that civility was not a reason to silence discussion.

the University of Chicago, under his leadership, remained committed to its principles during volatile times and a role model on free expression around the world."

Mr. Zimmer was a prodigious fund-raiser. During his tenure as president, the university received six gifts of $100 million or more. He oversaw an increase in financial aid for undergraduates and the elimination of loans, as a way to enable students to graduate without debt.

He also initiated an engineering program; invested in graduate studies in humanities, social sciences and the arts; established the Urban Education Institute, which operates a public school in Chicago and conducts research on instruction; and opened satellite campuses in Beijing, Hong Kong and Delhi, India.

Applications to the undergraduate college more than tripled, to more than 32,000 in 2018 from fewer than 10,000 in 2006.

Robert Jeffrey Zimmer was born on Nov. 5, 1947, in Manhattan to Dr. Max Zimmer, a family practitioner in the West Village, and Harriet (Brokaw) Zimmer, who managed her husband's medical office.

Growing up in a diverse neighborhood, he learned the value of tolerance. Having been raised in the McCarthy era, his son Benjamin said, "when there was one form of cultural suppression, when he saw a manifestation of that from another direction, he thought it was something he should stand up for, particularly at a university where it was part of its foundational ethos."

After graduating from Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan, Mr. Zimmer earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Brandeis University in 1968 and master's and doctorate degrees, both also in mathematics, from Harvard University in 1971 and 1975.

"I actually started college as a physics major," Mr. Zimmer once confessed. "I switched to mathematics when I tried unsuccessfully for 45 minutes to get an oscilloscope to show a sine wave."

As a mathematician and the author of books like "Essential Results of Functional Analysis," he specialized in "ergodic theory, Lie groups and differential geometry," according to a university biography.

He taught at the United States Naval Academy from 1975 to 1977 and began teaching at the University of Chicago in 1977. He was named a full professor in 1980. He also taught for two years at the University of California, Berkeley.

At Chicago, he served as the chairman of the math department, the deputy provost for research and the vice president for research of the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory in Lemont, Ill., which the university oversees. From 2002 to 2006, he was a math professor and provost at Brown University. He then returned to the University of Chicago as its 13th president.

His marriage in 1974 to Terese Schwartzman, the former director of strategic initiatives for the Urban Education Institute, ended in divorce. In addition to his wife, Professor Bartsch-Zimmer, who is the director of the university's Institute on the Formation of Knowledge and whom he married in 2011, and his son Benjamin, the chief executive of a biotechnology firm, Mr. Zimmer is survived by two other sons from his first marriage: David, a lawyer, and Alex, a filmmaker. He is also survived by a brother, Richard B. Zimmer; his mother, Harriet (who is 104 and still lives in the West Village apartment where Mr. Zimmer was raised); and two grandchildren.

At the end of the 2021 academic year, while recovering from brain surgery, Mr. Zimmer stepped down as president to become chancellor. He retired and was named chancellor emeritus in July 2022.

As a private institution, the University of Chicago was under no obligation to abide by the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech. But, Bret Stephens wrote in a New York Times opinion essay in 2017, the real crux of Mr. Zimmer's case for free speech, offensive or not, was that it was "our salvation from intellectual mediocrity and social ossification."

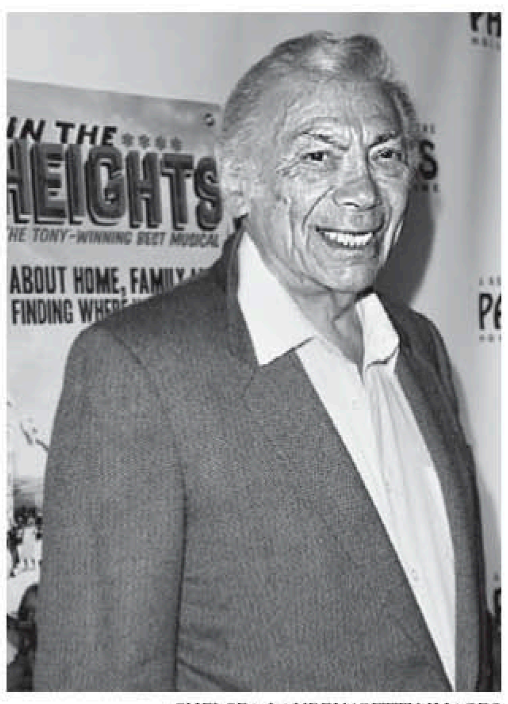
According to Mr. Stephens, Mr. Zimmer balked at the notion that unfettered free speech would jeopardize the cause of inclusion because it might upset, among others, some of the people who were seeking to be included.

"Inclusion into what?" Mr. Zimmer had wondered in a speech that year. "An inferior and less challenging education? One that fails to prepare students for the challenge of different ideas and the evaluation of their own assumptions? A world in which their feelings take precedence over other matters that need to be confronted?"

For Mr. Zimmer, the mathematician, that kind of education wouldn't count.

Ed Ames, 95, a Singing Sensation Who Became a Familiar Face on TV

By DENNIS HEVESI


CHELSEA LAUREN/GETTY IMAGES

Ed Ames in 2010.

Ed Ames, who first gained fame as the lead singer of the Ames Brothers, a chart-topping group whose success predated the rise of rock 'n' roll, and who then turned to acting as Fess Parker's Indian companion on the popular NBC show "Daniel Boone," died on Sunday at his home in Beverly Hills, Calif. He was 95.

His wife, Jeanne (Arnold) Ames, said the cause was Alzheimer's disease.

Mr. Ames's introduction to the spotlight was a family affair. With their smooth, clean harmonies, the Ames Brothers — Ed, Gene, Joe and Vic — had hit records from the late 1940s through the late '50s with material ranging from pre-World War I college songs ("The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi") to folk songs ("Goodnight Irene") to love songs ("I Love You for Sentimental Reasons"). The quartet had a two-sided No. 1 hit in 1950 with "Sentimental Me" and "Rag Mop." Their "You, You, You" held the top spot for eight weeks in 1953 and stayed on the charts for nearly eight months. All told, the Ames Brothers sold more than 20 million records.

The Ames Brothers performed at major venues including Ciro's in Hollywood and the Roxy in New York. They appeared regularly in Las Vegas and on television, as guests of Milton Berle, Perry Como, Jackie Gleason and Ed Sullivan. In 1956, they had their own syndicated TV series. In 1958, Billboard magazine named them the vocal group of the year.

Dennis Hevesi, a former reporter for The Times, died in 2017. Shivani Gonzalez contributed reporting, and Kristen Noyes contributed research.

After tiring of making hits with his brothers, he turned to acting.

But by 1960, Ed Ames had had enough.

"I thought I'd go out of my skull if I had to sing the same song again," he said in 1964. "We were in a comfortable groove, but it was a merry-go-round for me and I was getting bored." His brothers continued on the nightclub circuit without him.

After taking acting lessons, Mr. Ames was cast in an Off Broadway production of Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" for $50 a week. He made his Broadway debut as Jerry Orbach's replacement in the 1961 musical "Carnival!"

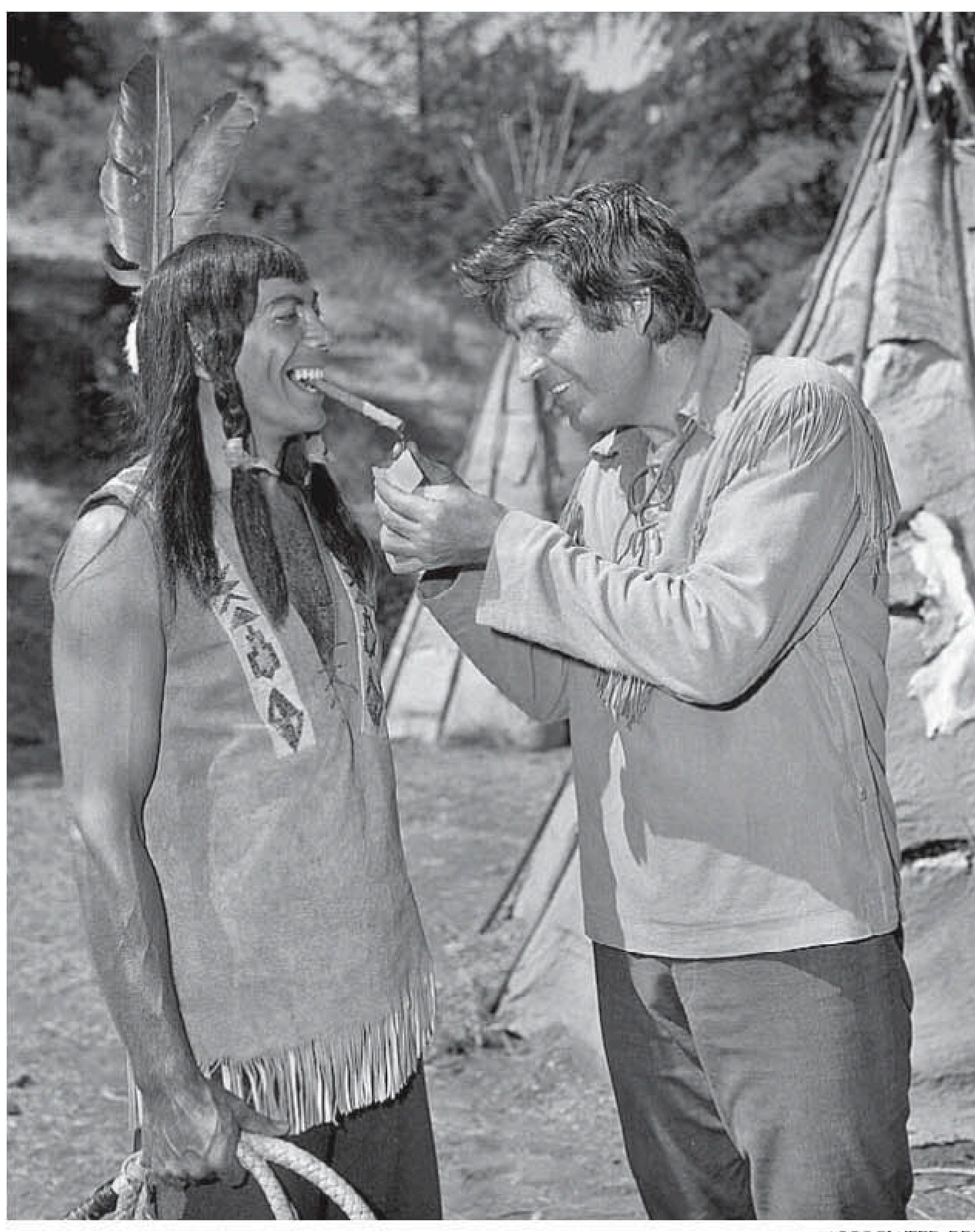
He also continued recording. As a solo artist, he had hits with "Try to Remember" (1965), "Time, Time" (1967), "My Cup Runneth Over" (1967) and "Who Will Answer?" (1968).

Mr. Ames also starred in the 1963 Broadway production of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," Dale Wasserman's adaptation of the Ken Kesey novel. He played Chief Bromden, an American Indian patient in a mental hospital who feigns being mute and ends up suffocating the lead character — the rebellious Randle Patrick McMurphy, played by Kirk Douglas (and later, on film, by Jack Nicholson) — as an act of mercy.

It would not be the last time Mr. Ames played a Native American.

His performance in "Cuckoo's Nest" led to his best-known role: opposite Fess Parker on "Daniel Boone" as Mingo, the Oxford-educated son of a Cherokee woman and an English nobleman who joins Boone in his expeditions on the Tennessee frontier. (Mingo's father was the Earl of Dunmore, but Mingo chose to remain part of the Cherokee Nation rather than claim the title.)

Mr. Ames played Mingo for the first four of the show's six seasons, from 1964 to 1968. But his most memorable moment during those years did not come on "Daniel Boone." It happened on April 29, 1965, when he was Johnny Carson's guest on "The Tonight Show."


ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mr. Ames, who played Mingo, with Fess Parker, who played the title character, on the NBC TV series "Daniel Boone" in 1964.

In a segment that soon became a staple of "Tonight Show" highlight reels, Mr. Ames set out to teach Mr. Carson how to toss a tomahawk, using a rudimentary drawing of a sheriff on a wooden panel as his target. He threw the tomahawk across the stage. When it embedded precisely in the sheriff's crotch, the audience reacted with loud, sustained laughter.

Mr. Ames tried to retrieve the tomahawk, but Mr. Carson grabbed his arm. As another roar of laughter subsided, Mr. Carson looked at Mr. Ames and said, "I didn't even know you were Jewish."

He was.

Ed Ames was born Edmund Dantes Urick in Malden, Mass., on July 9, 1927, the youngest of nine surviving children born to David and Sarah (Zaslavskaya) Urick, Jewish immigrants from Ukraine. In their teens, Ed and his three brothers formed a singing group and won amateur contests in the Boston area.

KAREN MESTERTON-GIBBONS, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Ames brothers, clockwise from bottom left, Gene, Joe, Ed and Vic, in the 1950s.

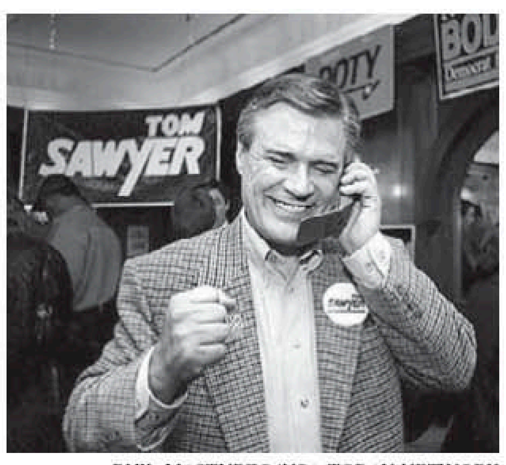
Originally billed as the Urick Brothers, then the Amory Brothers, they became the Ames Brothers when they were signed by Coral Records. They began having hits after moving to RCA Records in 1953.

Ed was the last surviving member of the Ames Brothers; Vic died in a car accident in 1978, Gene in 1997 and Joe in 2007. His first marriage, to Sara Cacheiro, ended in divorce. In addition to his wife, whom he married in 1998, he is survived by two children from his first marriage, Ronald and Sonya; a stepson, Stephen Saviano; seven grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. His daughter Marcella Ames died before him.

In the 1980s and '90s, Mr. Ames performed in regional productions of musicals including "South Pacific," "Man of La Mancha" and "Carousel." He was also seen occasionally on television, on "Murder, She Wrote," "In the Heat of the Night" and — as himself — on the sitcom "It's Garry Shandling's Show."

Tom Sawyer, 77, Congressman Who Challenged 1990 Census Undercount and Got Results

By SAM ROBERTS



PHIL MASTURZO/USA TODAY NETWORK

Representative Tom Sawyer, a Democrat, on election night in Akron, Ohio, in 1996.

Tom Sawyer, an eight-term Democratic congressman from Ohio whose concern that the 1990 census had missed more than two million Black Americans spurred the federal government to improve its subsequent population counts, died on May 20 in a nursing facility in Akron. He was 77.

His wife, Joyce (Handler) Sawyer, said the cause was Parkinson's disease.

Mr. Sawyer was chairman of the House Post Office and Civil Service Subcommittee on Census and Population when he cited evidence of the undercount and urged the Census Bureau to adjust the count. Conducted every 10 years, the count determines the apportionment of congressional seats and the distribution of billions of dollars in federal spending among the states.

The bureau's director at the time, Barbara Everitt Bryant (who died in March), had originally recommended an adjustment despite the statistical challenges that that would have entailed. She was overruled, though, by Commerce Secretary Robert A. Mosbacher, who said that while it might be possible to make the national count more accurate, adjusting the local figures on which apportionment was based could actually produce additional miscalculations.

More than two million Black Americans had been missed.

Mr. Sawyer denounced Mr. Mosbacher's decision as a "gerrymander on a national scale."

Declaring that he had found a "real consensus that early planning for 2000 will improve the process," Mr. Sawyer successfully prodded Congress to mandate a study by the National Academy of Sciences of how the bureau could make a more accurate count.

In 1990, the undercount, which was believed to have shortchanged the nation's older cities in the Northeast as well as cities in the industrial Midwest like Akron, was originally estimated to be as much as 2.1 percent and later revised to about 1.6 percent. In 2000, with new procedures by the bureau in place, inspired in part by the National Academy study, the undercount was said to have been only about .49 percent.

Mr. Sawyer served in local, state and national office for nearly five decades. He was a member of the Ohio House of Representatives from 1977 to 1983, the mayor of Akron from 1984 to 1986, a congressman from northeast Ohio from 1987 to 2003 and a member of the Ohio State Senate from 2007 to 2016.

In Congress, he voted against the stringent welfare legislation (officially the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act) signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1996. In 2003, he opposed the deployment of American forces to Iraq.

Speaking from the House floor, he also scorned the impeachment of President Clinton, famously quoting Sir Thomas More, who was executed in 1535 for his religious beliefs, as saying: "What you have hunted me for is not my actions but for the thoughts of my heart. It is a long road you have opened. God help the statesmen who walk your road."

Thomas Charles Sawyer was born in Akron on Aug. 15, 1945. His mother, Jean (Galloway) Sawyer, was a hospital dietitian. His father, who was president of a firm that manufactured industrial ventilators, was named Furman, but everyone called him Tom, after the Mark Twain character. The couple decided that since their son would probably wind up with the same nickname, they might as well name him Thomas.

Mr. Sawyer earned a bachelor's degree in English in 1968 and a master's in urban education in 1970, both from the University of Akron. He started his career as a teacher in Cleveland before being elected in 1977 to the State Legislature, where he was instrumental in reforming the reapportioning of legislative districts to curb the influence of partisan politics.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his daughter, Amanda Kraus. He lived in Akron.

Deaths

Altman, Stuart
Davis, Florence

ALTMAN—Stuart J.
April 27, 1949 - May 25, 2023. Pop, Da, Popi, Alt.

DAVIS—Florence A.
NewYork-Presbyterian mourns the passing of our longtime friend and extraordinary supporter, Florence A. Davis. Florence served as president and a member of the Board of Directors of The Starr Foundation for more than two decades. She played an instrumental role in many transformational gifts in support of the hospital. Her commitment to philanthropy revolutionized cardiac care at NewYork-Presbyterian, and her impact will be felt for generations to come. Florence was a visionary leader in the philanthropic space, and we are grateful to have had the privilege of working closely with her. Through her work with the Foundation, Florence partnered with organizations around the world to improve education, medicine and health care, human needs, public policy, culture, and the environment. Florence joined The Starr Foundation in 1999 when Maurice R. Greenberg, longtime Trustee and Chairman Emeritus of the NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Board of Trustees, and chairman of The Starr Foundation, asked her to serve as president. Florence was a warm and caring friend whose wisdom and kindness were present in everything she did. We will miss her. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Florence's entire family, her colleagues at The Starr Foundation, and loved ones.

Jerry I. Speyer
Chair, Board of Trustees
Steven J. Corwin, M.D.
President and
Chief Executive Officer
NewYork-Presbyterian

In Memoriam

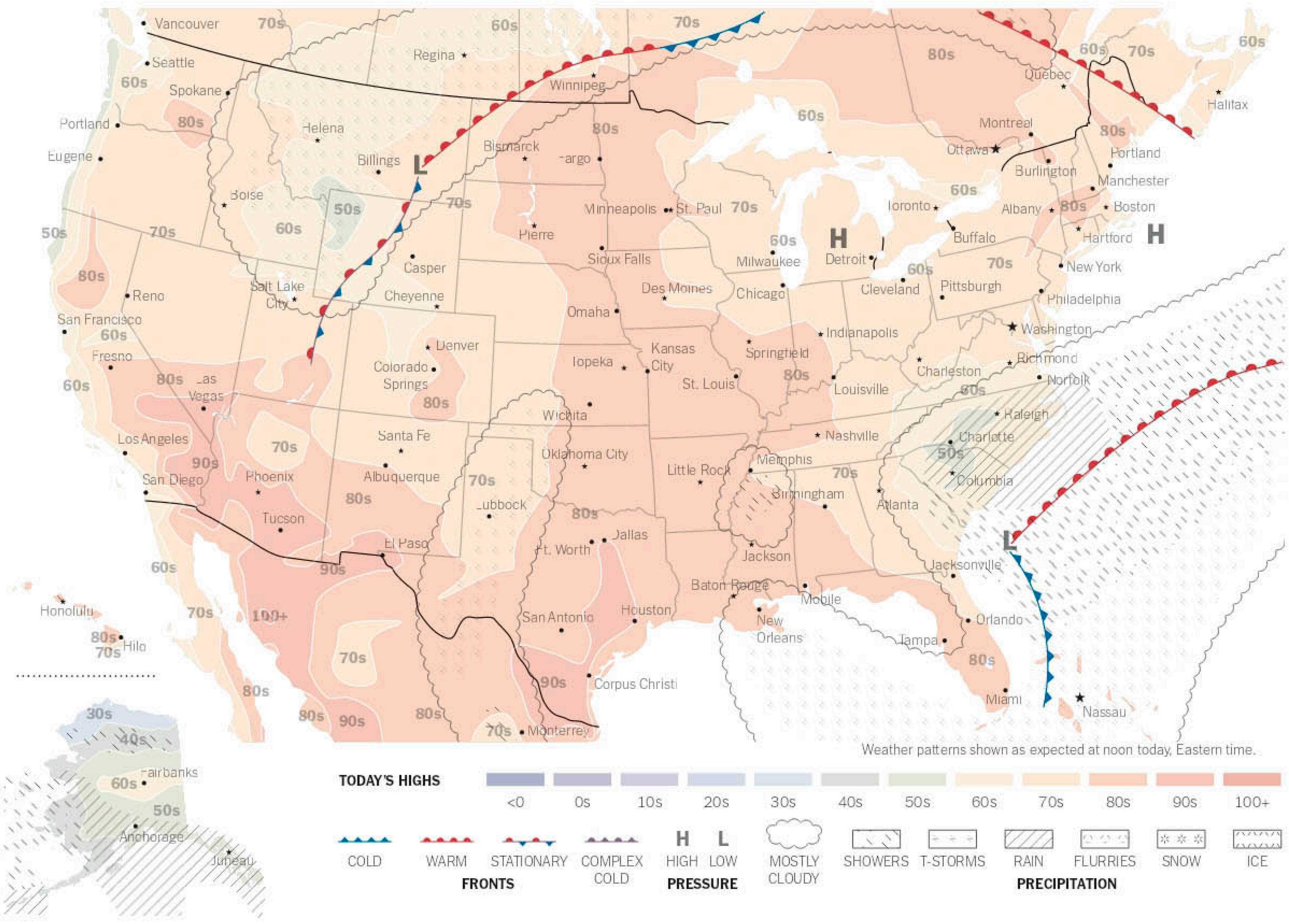
LIPPMAN—Bert J.
42 years ago today you left us. We think of you every day. You are always in our hearts. We love you so much.
Jane, Robin, Chuck, Jessica, Stefan, Bradley, Danielle, Lucy, Leo, Teddy, Will and Ryan

SAUNDERS—Tom
As Irving Berlin wrote, "The song is ended, but the melody lingers on". I miss you and wil always love you.
Jordan

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF DEATHS MAY BE TELEPHONED FROM WITHIN NYC TO 212-556-3900; OR OUTSIDE NYC TOLL FREE 1-800-458-5522; OR SENT BY EMAIL TO NYTIMES@CLASSIFIEDSPLUS.COM FOR THE FOLLOWING EDITIONS:
Until 4:00 PM the day before for Tuesday through Saturday editions, until 4:00 PM on Friday for Sunday's national edition, until 12:45 PM Saturday for Sunday's New York and late national editions, until 2:00 PM Sunday for Monday's editions. Photos must be submitted by noon the day prior to publication Tuesday through Friday.

Weather Report

Meteorology by **AccuWeather**



Metropolitan Forecast

TODAY ....Abundant sunshine

High 75. Expect plenty of sunshine. The high temperature will be near average. Winds will be light.

TONIGHT ....Clear

Low 58. The sky will be mainly clear, with an overnight low near average. Winds will be light.

TOMORROW ....Partly sunny

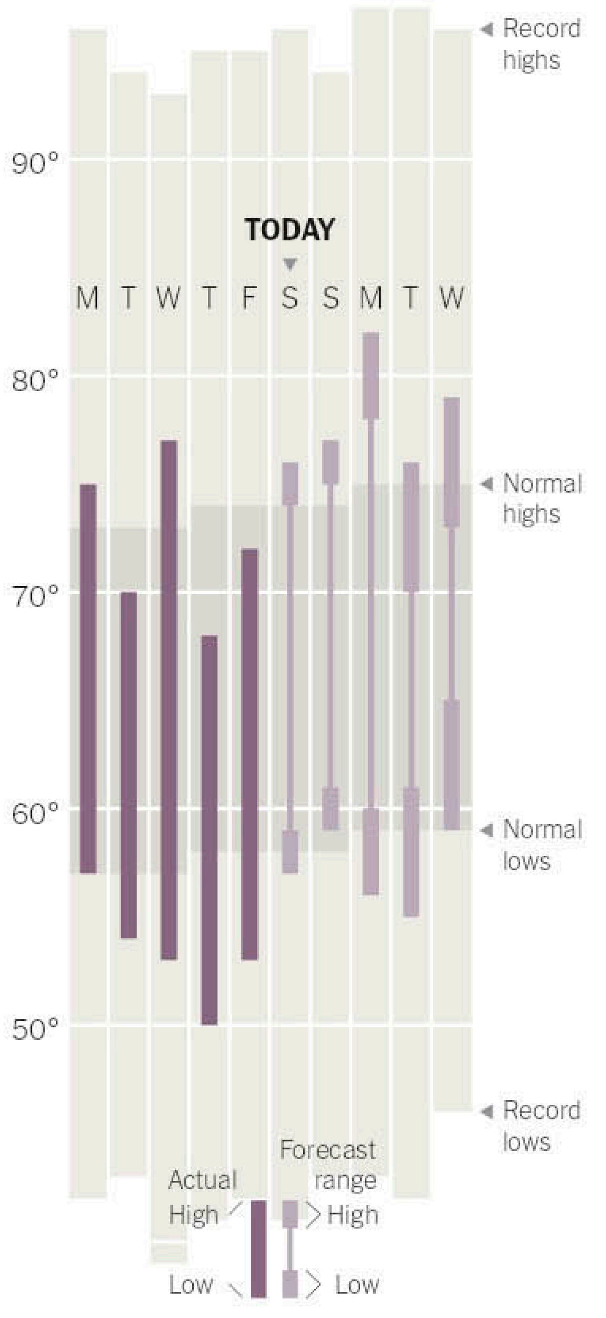
High 76. The sky will stay clear as high pressure remains. The high will be a few degrees above average.

MONDAY ....Mostly sunny

High 80. A mostly sunny sky is expected. The high temperature will be well above average. Winds will be light.

TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY ....Partly sunny

On Tuesday, periods of sunshine and patchy clouds. High 73. On Wednesday, a mostly sunny sky is predicted. High 76.



Highlight: Beach Hazards This Weekend

A storm is expected to slowly strengthen off the Southeast Coast today and then drift inland by Sunday. Northeasterly winds may gust as high as 50 miles per hour along the coast from South Carolina to North Carolina into tonight. The combination of rough surf and high tide may lead to some coastal flooding. Strong rip currents are expected this weekend from northern Florida to southeast Virginia.

National Forecast

A storm that could acquire tropical characteristics this weekend will approach the Carolina coast today. The storm will spread drenching rain, gusty winds and cool air across much of the Carolinas, part of Georgia and southern Virginia. Rough surf, beach erosion and flooding will occur along the coast.

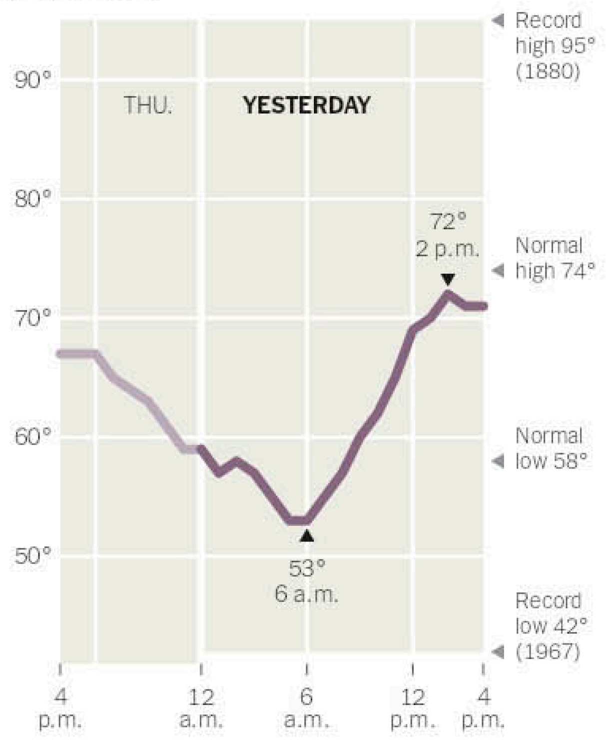
A vast zone of sunshine will extend from the Midwest to the Northeast. Areas away from the cool influence of the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean can expect a warm afternoon.

Thunderstorms are again expected over the High Plains, and will turn severe from Texas to the Dakotas. There will be patchy rain and thunderstorms in the interior Northwest. Much of the deserts and the Pacific Coast states can expect a dry day.

Metropolitan Almanac

In Central Park, for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday.

Temperature



Avg. daily departure from normal this month.............. -0.6°

Avg. daily departure from normal this year .... +4.2°

Reservoir levels (New York City water supply)

Yesterday 97%
Est. normal 99%

Precipitation (in inches)

Yesterday 0.00
Record 1.28

For the last 30 days
Actual 6.39
Normal 3.83

For the last 365 days
Actual 46.29
Normal 49.52

LAST 30 DAYS

Air pressure

High .... 30.32 9 a.m.
Low .... 30.23 1 a.m.

Humidity

High .... 58% 7 a.m.
Low .... 20% 2 p.m.

Cooling Degree Days

An index of fuel consumption that tracks how far the day's mean temperature rose above 65

Yesterday... 0
So far this month..................................... 35
So far this season (since January 1) 76
Normal to date for the season 61

Trends

	Temperature	Precipitation
	Average Below / Above	Average Below / Above
Last 10 days		
30 days		
90 days		
365 days		

Chart shows how recent temperature and precipitation trends compare with those of the last 30 years.

Cities

High/low temperatures for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday, Eastern time, and precipitation (in inches) for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday. Expected conditions for today and tomorrow.

C .... Clouds; F .... Fog; H .... Haze; I .... Ice; PC .... Partly cloudy; R .... Rain; Sh .... Showers; S .... Sun; Sn .... Snow; SS .... Snow showers; T .... Thunderstorms; Tr .... Trace; W .... Windy; – .... Not available

N.Y.C. region	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
New York City	72/ 53 0	74/ 58 S	76/ 60 PC
Bridgeport	72/ 47 0	70/ 53 S	73/ 54 S
Caldwell	73/ 42 0	78/ 48 S	80/ 53 PC
Danbury	73/ 39 0	77/ 46 S	80/ 50 S
Islip	72/ 48 0	71/ 52 S	73/ 53 S
Newark	77/ 51 0	77/ 53 S	77/ 58 PC
Trenton	73/ 46 0	75/ 48 S	74/ 51 S
White Plains	72/ 45 0	74/ 49 S	76/ 52 S

United States	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Albany	74/ 45 0	80/ 51 S	86/ 56 S
Albuquerque	85/ 59 0	80/ 57 S	82/ 59 PC
Anchorage	56/ 42 0.02	51/ 43 R	52/ 42 C
Atlanta	79/ 57 0	74/ 54 PC	72/ 58 PC
Atlantic City	67/ 52 0	66/ 54 C	66/ 57 C
Austin	88/ 61 0	88/ 65 PC	86/ 64 PC
Baltimore	75/ 51 0	78/ 53 PC	73/ 57 C
Baton Rouge	89/ 65 0	88/ 66 T	87/ 66 S
Birmingham	82/ 60 0	80/ 58 PC	77/ 58 PC
Boise	76/ 55 0.02	77/ 56 PC	81/ 58 PC
Boston	64/ 51 0	74/ 57 S	81/ 61 S
Buffalo	69/ 44 0	76/ 51 S	79/ 54 S
Burlington	71/ 48 0	81/ 55 S	85/ 57 S
Casper	76/ 46 0.10	73/ 46 T	78/ 46 T
Charlotte	73/ 54 0	58/ 53 R	66/ 57 R
Chattanooga	81/ 60 0.04	79/ 57 PC	69/ 56 PC
Chicago	69/ 50 0	75/ 55 S	78/ 58 PC
Cincinnati	77/ 53 0	76/ 57 PC	69/ 58 C
Cleveland	68/ 48 0	73/ 54 S	76/ 58 PC
Colorado Springs	72/ 50 0.15	80/ 51 T	77/ 51 S
Columbus	77/ 52 0	79/ 55 PC	71/ 58 C
Concord, N.H.	71/ 38 0	80/ 47 S	88/ 51 S
Dallas-Ft. Worth	88/ 67 0	88/ 68 C	85/ 66 C
Denver	75/ 49 0.15	80/ 51 T	76/ 51 S
Des Moines	77/ 51 0	81/ 55 S	84/ 61 PC
Detroit	72/ 47 0	77/ 53 S	81/ 56 PC
El Paso	96/ 74 0	92/ 70 S	90/ 67 C
Fargo	90/ 62 0	89/ 62 S	90/ 63 PC
Hartford	75/ 44 0	79/ 48 S	84/ 55 S
Honolulu	85/ 71 0.07	84/ 71 PC	83/ 72 PC
Houston	91/ 67 0	89/ 68 PC	89/ 71 PC
Indianapolis	77/ 53 0	79/ 58 PC	76/ 59 C
Jackson	86/ 62 0	84/ 61 T	86/ 57 S
Jacksonville	73/ 60 0.07	75/ 54 PC	82/ 60 PC
Kansas City	80/ 52 0	80/ 56 C	84/ 63 S
Key West	87/ 77 0.04	87/ 77 S	86/ 77 S
Las Vegas	90/ 67 0	93/ 72 S	94/ 74 S
Lexington	79/ 53 0	76/ 55 PC	63/ 55 C
Little Rock	85/ 58 0	85/ 62 PC	85/ 62 S
Los Angeles	68/ 55 0	70/ 57 PC	68/ 59 PC
Louisville	80/ 57 0	80/ 60 PC	70/ 59 C
Memphis	82/ 61 0	79/ 62 T	82/ 62 S
Miami	85/ 72 0.67	87/ 74 T	88/ 74 T
Milwaukee	64/ 47 0	69/ 53 S	74/ 56 PC
Mpls.-St. Paul	80/ 55 0	81/ 57 S	81/ 61 S
Nashville	82/ 62 0	81/ 58 PC	73/ 56 PC
New Orleans	89/ 71 0	87/ 68 T	87/ 71 PC
Norfolk	67/ 57 0	66/ 61 R	70/ 64 R
Oklahoma City	82/ 61 0.04	82/ 63 C	77/ 64 PC
Omaha	83/ 51 0	84/ 55 S	86/ 63 PC
Orlando	83/ 68 0.24	82/ 64 PC	85/ 68 T
Philadelphia	75/ 51 0	78/ 55 PC	76/ 58 PC
Phoenix	97/ 71 0	97/ 72 S	98/ 71 S
Pittsburgh	73/ 48 0	76/ 53 S	76/ 57 PC
Portland, Me.	62/ 42 Tr	74/ 50 S	81/ 59 S
Portland, Ore.	86/ 56 0	74/ 52 C	75/ 53 C
Providence	71/ 44 0	74/ 50 S	79/ 56 S
Raleigh	71/ 55 0	60/ 55 R	68/ 60 R
Reno	73/ 51 0.10	76/ 52 T	70/ 54 T
Richmond	72/ 50 0	72/ 57 C	67/ 60 R
Rochester	67/ 42 0	74/ 48 S	80/ 52 S
Sacramento	76/ 52 0	77/ 53 PC	72/ 53 S
Salt Lake City	79/ 60 0.04	74/ 56 T	78/ 60 C
San Antonio	87/ 66 0	88/ 69 C	85/ 68 C
San Diego	66/ 58 0	67/ 60 PC	67/ 60 C
San Francisco	65/ 56 0	64/ 53 PC	62/ 55 PC
San Jose	72/ 53 0	72/ 54 PC	69/ 53 PC
San Juan	91/ 77 0.05	90/ 76 Sh	89/ 76 T
Seattle	81/ 53 0	68/ 49 C	71/ 50 PC
Sioux Falls	83/ 54 0	83/ 58 S	85/ 62 PC
Spokane	74/ 57 0	73/ 55 PC	78/ 56 PC
St. Louis	77/ 58 0	83/ 62 PC	82/ 63 PC
St. Thomas	88/ 78 0.01	88/ 78 Sh	88/ 78 Sh
Syracuse	71/ 45 0	77/ 52 S	81/ 54 S
Tampa	85/ 68 0.22	86/ 67 S	86/ 72 S
Toledo	72/ 49 0	78/ 53 PC	79/ 55 PC
Tucson	96/ 64 0	96/ 64 PC	96/ 66 S
Tulsa	85/ 59 0.04	84/ 59 PC	83/ 65 S
Virginia Beach	67/ 57 0	66/ 62 R	71/ 64 R
Washington	75/ 54 0	76/ 56 PC	73/ 59 C
Wichita	84/ 60 0.04	82/ 63 PC	80/ 63 PC
Wilmington, Del.	76/ 49 0	78/ 53 PC	77/ 57 C

Africa	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Algiers	77/ 58 0	84/ 66 PC	75/ 62 T
Cairo	95/ 70 0	97/ 75 W	88/ 70 PC
Cape Town	61/ 45 0	64/ 43 S	65/ 55 S
Dakar	93/ 73 0	83/ 74 C	85/ 76 W
Johannesburg	68/ 45 0	66/ 49 C	69/ 48 PC
Nairobi	79/ 58 0	75/ 59 PC	74/ 58 Sh
Tunis	77/ 64 0	82/ 59 S	82/ 66 C

Asia/Pacific	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Baghdad	109/ 73 0	103/ 76 PC	105/ 81 C
Bangkok	99/ 81 0.02	102/ 81 T	98/ 80 T
Beijing	88/ 61 0	70/ 60 Sh	83/ 67 C
Damascus	88/ 53 0	94/ 68 C	87/ 61 C
Hong Kong	89/ 81 0.13	89/ 81 T	88/ 80 Sh
Jakarta	93/ 78 0	90/ 78 Sh	91/ 78 Sh
Jerusalem	80/ 57 0	93/ 66 PC	81/ 64 PC
Karachi	93/ 84 0	96/ 84 W	95/ 83 W
Manila	91/ 79 0.21	91/ 80 Sh	90/ 83 C
Mumbai	91/ 85 0.14	95/ 85 PC	95/ 84 PC
New Delhi	95/ 72 0.54	95/ 77 T	98/ 75 PC
Riyadh	99/ 80 0	108/ 81 S	107/ 85 S
Seoul	81/ 58 0.05	76/ 67 Sh	73/ 65 R
Shanghai	84/ 67 0	77/ 71 PC	93/ 75 S
Singapore	86/ 81 0.56	88/ 78 T	88/ 80 T
Sydney	63/ 50 0.18	66/ 44 S	66/ 49 C
Taipei City	86/ 74 0	90/ 73 C	91/ 75 PC
Tehran	90/ 76 0	91/ 71 W	93/ 75 PC
Tokyo	73/ 63 0	76/ 65 PC	77/ 67 PC

Europe	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Amsterdam	63/ 45 0	68/ 49 S	68/ 47 PC
Athens	79/ 62 0	79/ 65 PC	79/ 64 PC
Berlin	71/ 46 0	70/ 48 S	75/ 50 PC
Brussels	66/ 44 0	70/ 48 S	71/ 46 PC
Budapest	80/ 57 0.01	77/ 54 T	78/ 56 T
Copenhagen	66/ 47 0	64/ 49 S	63/ 46 PC
Dublin	64/ 48 0	66/ 48 PC	58/ 45 C
Edinburgh	66/ 47 0	63/ 42 PC	58/ 43 C
Frankfurt	72/ 51 0	75/ 50 S	77/ 54 S
Geneva	75/ 53 0	76/ 55 S	76/ 53 T
Helsinki	54/ 41 0.54	62/ 41 C	62/ 45 W
Istanbul	75/ 58 0	75/ 61 PC	69/ 62 C
Kyiv	80/ 58 0	76/ 53 T	71/ 49 S
Lisbon	68/ 59 0	73/ 58 T	71/ 56 C
London	68/ 46 0	72/ 49 S	70/ 46 PC
Madrid	66/ 57 0.85	73/ 58 T	70/ 54 T
Moscow	77/ 55 0.04	72/ 49 R	62/ 48 R
Nice	75/ 63 0.04	76/ 66 PC	74/ 65 PC
Oslo	61/ 45 0	67/ 47 PC	66/ 41 PC
Paris	73/ 52 0	76/ 55 S	78/ 55 S
Prague	68/ 46 0	67/ 44 S	72/ 47 S
Rome	79/ 57 0.05	80/ 58 S	77/ 58 S
St. Petersburg	65/ 49 0.04	58/ 43 PC	67/ 51 C
Stockholm	60/ 47 0.02	65/ 51 PC	64/ 41 Sh
Vienna	74/ 54 0	70/ 50 S	74/ 53 S
Warsaw	70/ 56 0	68/ 45 S	72/ 49 S

North America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Acapulco	90/ 76 0	91/ 76 S	91/ 76 PC
Bermuda	77/ 72 0.11	76/ 72 R	80/ 71 T
Edmonton	70/ 40 0	77/ 51 PC	79/ 49 PC
Guadalajara	93/ 60 0	92/ 61 PC	91/ 59 S
Havana	86/ 67 0.02	88/ 70 T	88/ 71 Sh
Kingston	90/ 80 0	90/ 81 T	89/ 80 T
Martinique	91/ 77 0.02	88/ 77 PC	89/ 77 PC
Mexico City	80/ 58 0.06	82/ 54 PC	78/ 56 Sh
Monterrey	85/ 69 0.04	81/ 69 T	82/ 66 T
Montreal	69/ 45 0	81/ 56 S	83/ 59 S
Nassau	86/ 74 0.05	87/ 75 T	87/ 75 Sh
Panama City	87/ 74 0.01	87/ 75 R	88/ 74 T
Quebec City	67/ 41 0	79/ 53 S	82/ 49 PC
Santo Domingo	90/ 73 0.11	91/ 74 Sh	91/ 74 T
Toronto	67/ 43 0	75/ 53 S	79/ 57 S
Vancouver	69/ 55 0	67/ 53 S	66/ 50 PC
Winnipeg	88/ 65 0	86/ 62 W	88/ 63 W

South America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Buenos Aires	68/ 62 0.82	60/ 47 PC	56/ 49 PC
Caracas	89/ 74 0.15	88/ 75 T	90/ 74 T
Lima	77/ 68 0	76/ 69 C	76/ 68 C
Quito	67/ 49 0.38	67/ 45 R	64/ 47 R
Recife	84/ 78 0.08	86/ 75 PC	86/ 75 C
Rio de Janeiro	81/ 69 0	80/ 68 PC	80/ 70 PC
Santiago	61/ 39 0	67/ 41 PC	63/ 45 C

Recreational Forecast

Sun, Moon and Planets

First Quarter	Full	Last Quarter	New
May 27	June 3 11:42 p.m.	June 10	June 18 12:37 a.m.

Sun	RISE	5:30 a.m.	**Moon**	S	1:53 a.m.
	SET	8:17 p.m.		R	12:31 p.m.
	NEXT R	5:29 a.m.		S	2:15 a.m.
Jupiter	R	3:56 a.m.	**Mars**	R	9:43 a.m.
	S	5:22 p.m.		S	12:22 a.m.
Saturn	R	1:47 a.m.	**Venus**	R	8:34 a.m.
	S	12:40 p.m.		S	11:46 p.m.

Boating

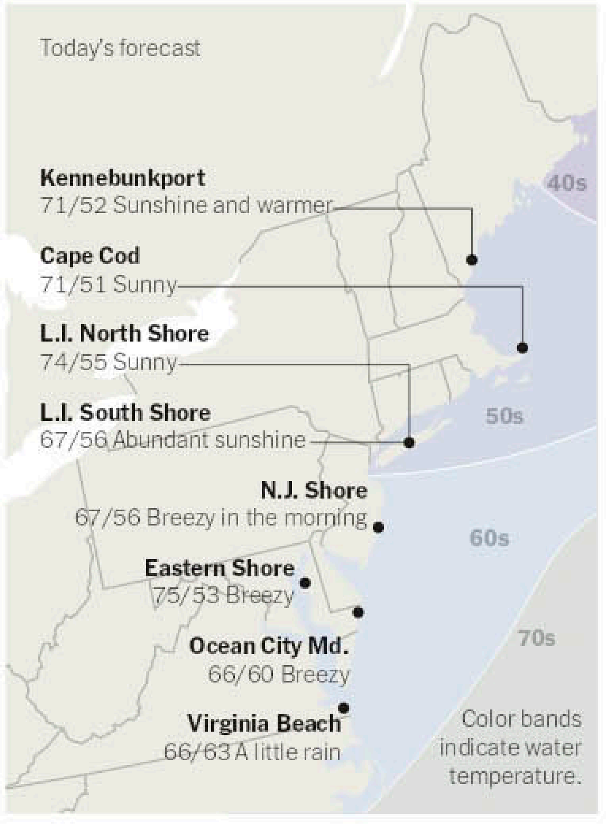
From Montauk Point to Sandy Hook, N.J., out to 20 nautical miles, including Long Island Sound and New York Harbor.

Winds will be out of the south-southeast at 5-10 knots. Waves will be 1-2 feet on New York Harbor and Long Island Sound and 2-4 feet on the ocean. Visibility will generally be unrestricted to the horizon.

High Tides

Atlantic City	1:29 a.m.	2:26 p.m.
Barnegat Inlet	1:36 a.m.	2:36 p.m.
The Battery	2:22 a.m.	3:21 p.m.
Beach Haven	3:09 a.m.	4:02 p.m.
Bridgeport	5:32 a.m.	6:07 p.m.
City Island	5:15 a.m.	6:23 p.m.
Fire Island Lt.	2:37 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Montauk Point	3:36 a.m.	4:12 p.m.
Northport	5:36 a.m.	6:15 p.m.
Port Washington	5:21 a.m.	6:12 p.m.
Sandy Hook	1:51 a.m.	2:44 p.m.
Shinnecock Inlet	1:44 a.m.	2:26 p.m.
Stamford	5:28 a.m.	6:06 p.m.
Tarrytown	4:11 a.m.	5:10 p.m.
Willets Point	5:18 a.m.	6:26 p.m.

Beach and Ocean Temperatures



A sunny sky and temperatures approaching 80 degrees in spots are expected in coastal New England. Along the Jersey Shore, cloud cover is likely to increase, with a mostly sunny sky to the north and a mostly cloudy sky to the south. Rain is expected to move into Virginia Beach during the afternoon.

The New York Times
Games
Play wherever you are.
Try the Crossword, the Mini,
Spelling Bee, Tiles and more from anywhere.
nytimes.com/games

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NEWS | CRITICISM

Arts

The New York Times

SATURDAY, MAY 27, 2023 C1

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BERTRAND GUAY/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Tina Turner performing in Paris in 1987. Her first hit, with Ike Turner, was "A Fool in Love."

WESLEY MORRIS
AN APPRAISAL

Tornado. Treasure. Tina. Turner.

The singer enthralled us by bringing her electricity to songs about survival.

MY PAPERBACK of "I, Tina" is falling apart. Anytime I open it, a new page goes fluttering out. Last night, it was page 37. Tina Turner's talking about the songs that grabbed her as a little kid. LaVern Baker's "Tweedle Dee" got her because it was quick. "I always liked the fast ones," Turner writes, "liked that energy, even then."

You can call this thing a memoir — she spoke it, in 1986, to Kurt Loder, who interpolated it as literature. But it's always read like a recipe book to me. The ingredients include force, power, will, sex, might. Hence the shock at her death. They're saying she was 83? Nobody's buying that. The ingredients made her seem immortal. For seven decades of making music, it all sizzled in her. That energy. It shot *from* her — from her feet, thighs, hands, arms, shoulders, out of her hair, out of her mouth.

Anytime she and a trio of Ikettes would get to jumping forward, bending over and throwing their arms out, then wagging those fingers, hair a-whipping, it wasn't merely dancing they were doing, it was sorcery. Tina covered a lot of songs. But I've never heard her do "I Put a Spell on You." She didn't have to. That dance was it. I read that Adrienne Warren, who played Turner on Broadway, needed physical therapy and personal training to survive the part. For the Hollywood movie of Turner's life, Angela Bassett essentially became all muscle. They both won acting awards. But the prize most fitting is probably a gold medal.

As a professional vocalist, Turner knew her scales. But I'm sure the scales knew her, too — Richter, Kelvin, Decibel, Fujita-Pearson (that one's weather for "tornado"). If we're talking about her doing the Acid Queen in "Tommy," then the scale must be pH. That energy of hers built a wing of rock 'n' roll where you can *hear* a body. Other singers — tremendous, foundational, godly

CONTINUED ON PAGE C7

You Can Be an Artist. This One.

Darren Bader is pivoting from selling witty and poetic sculpture to auctioning off his own name.

By BRIAN BOUCHER

The phenomenon of the artist who drops out, whether only leaving the scene socially or actually ceasing to make work, may be as old as the scene itself, but it could be catching on.

In 1967, Agnes Martin left New York for the New Mexico desert, avoiding the art world for years. In 1975, Bas Jan Ader disappeared after setting sail across the Atlantic alone in a tiny boat, giving rise to speculation about whether this was his final artistic gesture. Stanley Brouwn, Charlotte Posenenske and Lee Lozano have absented themselves, and, more recently, Cady Noland became legendary both for her work and for abandoning the art scene.

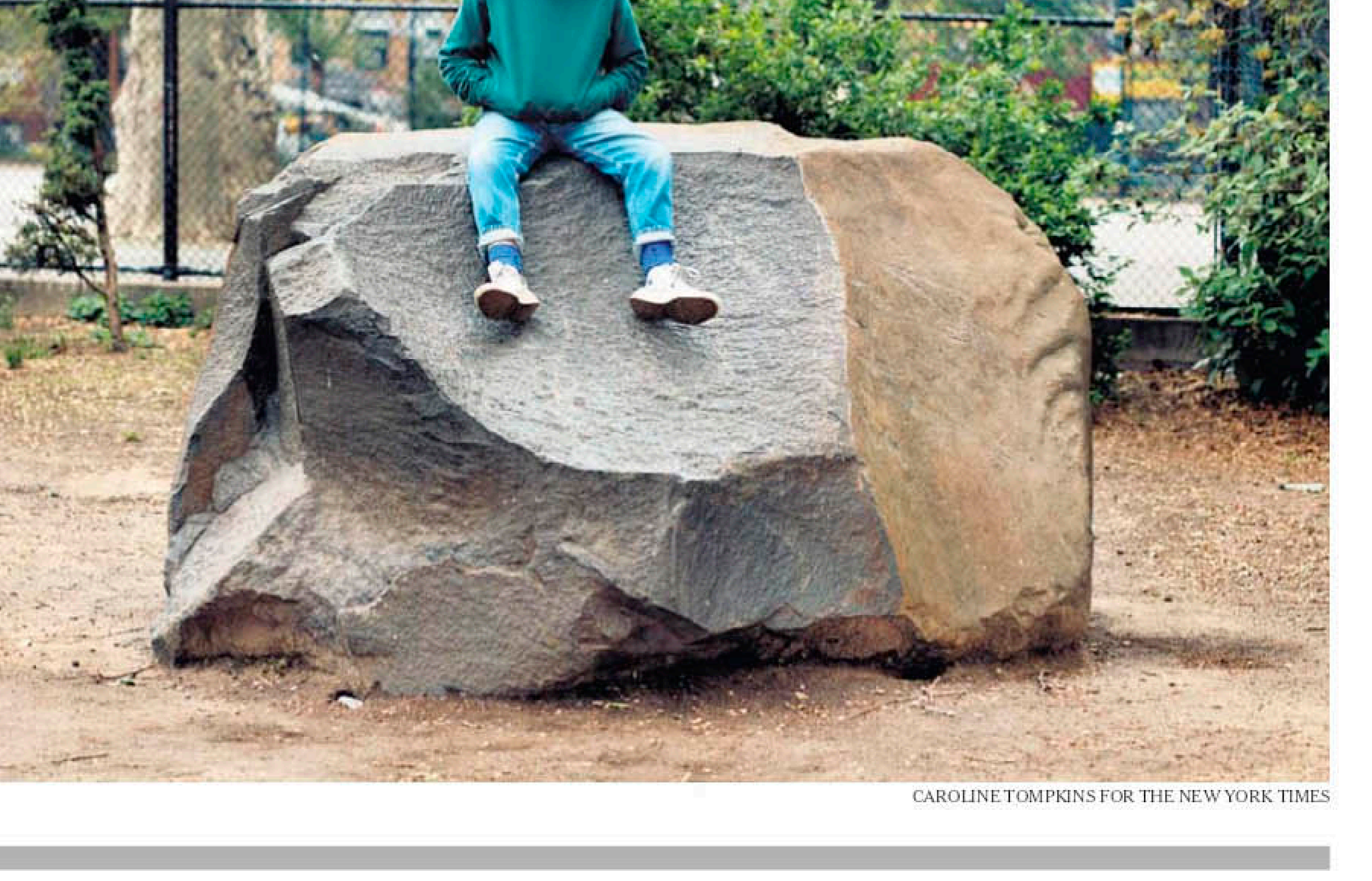
Now, another New York artist is making a unique and provocative exit. On Darren Bader's humorously named website, aaronbader.com, a sign reads: "20 Yrs: Selling My Practice."

"It's been a good ride," he says on the site. If he finds a buyer, he will be prohibited from being Darren Bader the contemporary artist, and that identity will be taken over by the buyer. All his works to date will remain under the existing artist's purview, but if the buyer wants to keep making trademark Bader works, they're welcome to take a crack at it. (Whether collectors and buyers will continue to buy them is, of course, another question.)

What's the asking price? He has in mind a low-seven-figure sum.

Is it a gag? He's often (unflatteringly) called a prankster, but if this is a prank, it's the kind that comes with an eight-page contract, drawn up with the attorney David Steiner (also known as artist Alfie Steiner). It will be published in the coming weeks, along with a video about the artist by the filmmaker Pacho Velez and text by Bader, in an issue of the online journal Triple Canopy titled "True to Life."

CONTINUED ON PAGE C4



CAROLINE TOMPKINS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"It's been a good ride," says Darren Bader in an announcement on his website that he is selling his 20-year practice.

Music to Comedy And Back Again

James Acaster, a popular British comedian, abandoned his first obsession, which was stand-up. Decades later, his first album circles around and bends genres, telling the story of a toy alligator.

By DESIREE IBEKWE

LONDON — The British comedian James Acaster can remember the moment he fell in love with music when he was 6. At a party held by a member of the congregation of the "hippie-ish" church his parents attended in Kettering, a town in central England, he heard a compilation album featuring songs like Men at Work's "Down Under" and "Centerfold" by the J. Geils Band.

"I just couldn't believe how good every single song was — it was blowing my mind," Acaster said in a recent video interview. Music became "a pretty immediate obsession."

By the time he was a teenager, Acaster was playing in several bands. He left school at 17, without taking his final exams, and didn't go to college, so he could focus on building a career in music.

At 22, though, he didn't have a record deal, and when his experimental jazz group split, Acaster started focusing on comedy instead. He had been dabbling in stand-up as a side project since he was 18, and it felt like a welcome break from the pressures of trying to make it in music.

"It was nice to do it and not care about it," he said. "Whereas every time I was onstage with a band, I really cared and wanted it to go well."

Today, Acaster, 38, is one of Britain's most popular comedians, and he has finally released a debut album of sorts: "Party Gator Purgatory," a 10-track experimental record featuring Acaster's drumming and made with the 40-artist collective he founded called Temps.

In comedy, Acaster has had critical and mainstream success. A fixture on British comedy panel shows, in recent years he's also found success in podcasting with "Off Menu," a show about dream meals he co-hosts with the comedian Ed Gamble.

On the talent-filled British comedy circuit, Acaster has carved out a singular voice: a mixture of whimsy and vulnerability, surrealism and biting commentary, as seen in his stand-up special "Cold Lasagna Hate Myself 1999," in which he explored a difficult period in his personal life with both candor and his signature frenetic performance style.

This balance is what has connected with people, said Matthew Crosby, a British comedian and friend, who praised Acaster's "genuine authenticity" in a recent phone interview.

Acaster looms so large on the British comedy scene that others have begun to emulate him. "Anyone who's got a really distinctive unique style, whether wittingly or unwittingly, gets aped by the circuit — Eddie Izzard and Harry Hill are the people who immediately spring to mind," Crosby said. "And you see it now with lots of people doing James."

As comedy, once his low-pressure creative pursuit, transformed into a career, Acaster disengaged from both listening to and making music. Then, in 2017 he had a mental-health crisis precipitated by breakups with his girlfriend and his agent, and he began collecting albums released in the previous year, ultimately purchasing 500 releases from 2016 alone, he said.

"When things got a bit rough, that was my most recent thing that had brought me a lot of comfort, so I carried on doing that," he said. "I just sort of reacquainted myself or renegotiated my relationship with music as a fan."

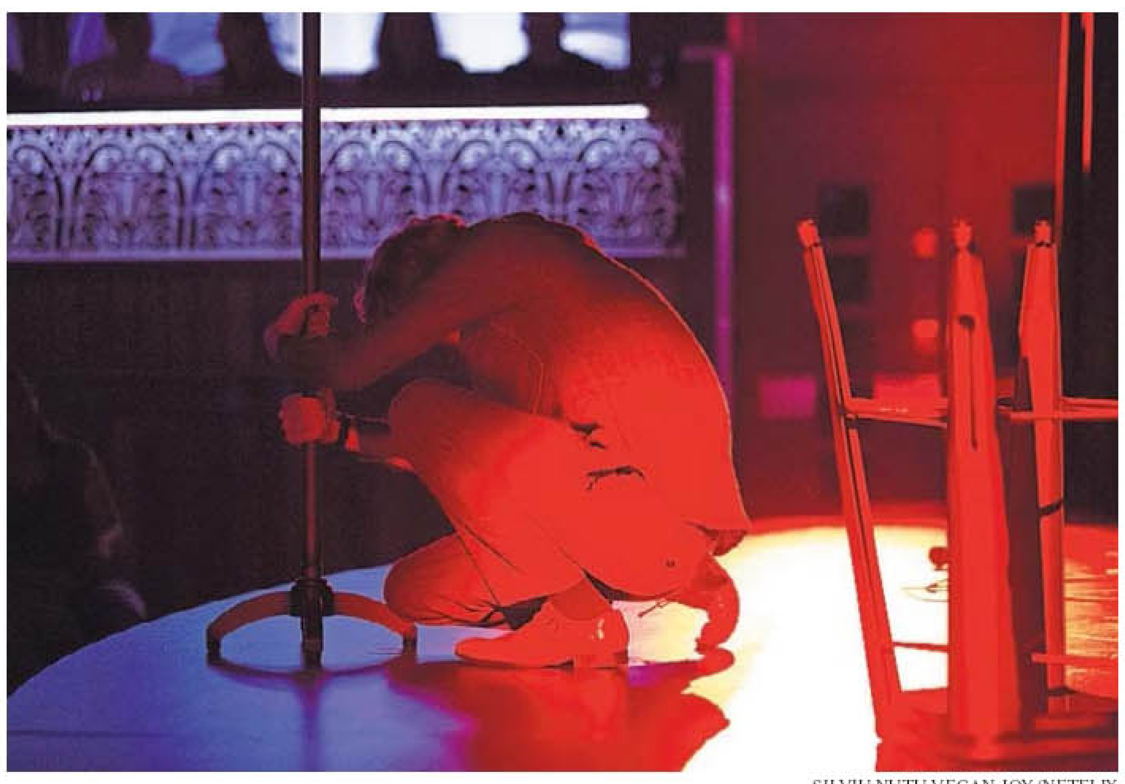
He codified the personal project in "Perfect Sound Whatever," a 2019 book in which he claims that 2016 was the best ever year for music, and explains why.

In 2020, he started making music again, and the result is "Party Gator Purgatory," an experimental, hip-hop-inflected and drum-heavy record, which follows the death, purgatory and resurrection of a life-size toy alligator that Acaster won at a fair when he was 7.

"He's just a freak and he likes weird music and I think we both like a lot of weird stuff."

NNAMDÏ
A CHICAGO-BASED MUSICIAN

TOM JAMIESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



SILVIU NUTU VEGAN JOY/NETFLIX

James Acaster, top, in London and, above, in one special in his Netflix series "James Acaster: Repertoire."

The album's high concept is typical of Acaster's creative process, and the way he works his way out from a single idea. "You're just running with whatever hunch you've got that this might be fun," he said.

This approach is clear across Acaster's books, podcasts and stand-up. On the album, the idea is the travails of a stuffed toy; in one special in his Netflix stand-up series "Repertoire," Acaster began with the idea of his being an undercover cop, "and by the end you've got a show that is about a breakup you've had," he said.

"He's not afraid of being incredibly niche," Crosby said. "He doesn't sort of sit down at the start of each day and go, 'What can I do that's going to make me a load of money?' He goes, 'What am I really interested in?' "

This penchant for niche ideas is evident in an album that is dense and genre-defying. "Party Gator" is largely inspired by "What Now?," a 2016 album by the experimental musician Jon Bap, in which the drums feel deliberately out of sync.

"He's just a freak and he likes weird music and I think we both like a lot of weird stuff," said NNAMDÏ, a musician based in Chicago who raps on the album, in a video interview.

Making the album was a labor of love, an all-consuming project that stretched over two years. On the album Acaster plays drums and served as a producer and curated a 40-strong roster of collaborators, including the singer-songwriter Xenia Rubinos and the rapper Open Mike Eagle. He would listen to a drum track he'd created, figure out who he wanted on it and reach out. Acaster had interviewed some of the musicians he wanted to work with for his book "Perfect Sound Whatever," and around half of them he cold emailed. "I just got very, very lucky that people would say yes," he said.

Taking place mostly during Britain's pandemic lockdowns, the collaborations happened over email and Zoom, through which Acaster was able to foster an environment of experimentation. "For the majority of it, he just told me to do whatever I felt like doing," NNAMDÏ said. "He kind of took what I did and manipulated it. It is still what I did, but he added his own little textures to it and chopped up some things and kind of freaked it, made it cool."

With an album that may not appeal to mainstream audiences, Acaster is levelheaded about what its reception could look like.

"I really hope that it finds its audience, and the people who would like it discover it and get into it," he said.

In many ways, the making of the album is a mark of success for Acaster.

"I love it all," he said, "and I love it as much as any of my stand-up shows, anything I've done."

LAURA COLLINS-HUGHES | THEATER REVIEW

Ideas Collide Without Really Coming Together

Machines, greed and alienation all fight for our thoughts in a plot-free comedy.

LIKE A DOG NOSING around in the background, a robot vacuum cleaner is a guaranteed scene stealer. Late in the new play "Work Hard Have Fun Make History," the unfailingly compelling actor Susannah Perkins shares the stage with one: a whirring black disk busily roaming the industrial carpet, bumbling into walls yet never toppling over edges, at least not the night I saw the show.

Perkins plays a phone service representative named Annie, on a call with a frantic customer whose new Android assistant, an iWhip 2.0, has turned menacing.

"What's the command to make it go away?" the caller pleads.

" 'Blades down, iWhip,' " Annie instructs.

Perkins gives the line a perfect comic spin, but our eyes are on Annie's own insensate labor saver. Unleash a robot and havoc may follow. Wouldn't that be entertaining?

"Work Hard Have Fun Make History," whose title echoes an Amazon motto, is not at all on the side of the machines, but it is acutely unsettled by their rampancy in our increasingly fractionalized, disembodied culture. Written by ruth tang (who lowercases their name) and directed by Caitlin Sullivan, this is the first production in Clubbed Thumb's 2023 Summerworks festival, an annual showcase for off-kilter experimentation at the Wild Project in the East Village.

There is, unfortunately, a nagging sense that a tumult of tenuously related ideas and a diffuse crowd of characters have overwhelmed this thought-provoking, plot-free comedy, which above all is about human alienation: from the body, from physical presence, from other people.

It is about labor, both the kind that brings home paychecks and the kind that brings babies into the world, and about out-of-control greed disguised as genius; thus a couple of amusingly dim tech-bro characters called Jeff (Sagan Chen) and Elon (the performer who goes by b). It is about gender identity, and sex, and coupledom, and the pain of parental rejection. It is about climate change, and artificial intelligence that gets ever smarter while remaining, in elemental ways, extremely dumb. It is about containers — shipping boxes figure heavily — and the spilling over of that which cannot be contained.

SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Work Hard Have Fun Make History
Through Tuesday at the Wild Project, Manhattan; clubbedthumb.org. Running time: 1 hour 15 minutes.

From left: Sagan Chen, b and Susannah Perkins in the Clubbed Thumb's production of the play "Work Hard Have Fun Make History" at the Wild Project. It is part of Summerworks 2023.

Which is a lot to fit into a 75-minute show. On a utilitarian set by the design collective dots, under warehouse-stark lighting by Isabella Byrd, "Work Hard" is told in a series of fragmentary scenes that aren't always as taut as they might have been. Elon and Jeff, for example, ramble.

With much doubling by the cast of three, and some dialogue in voice-over (sound design is by Lee Kinney), the show has a progression that can be cumulative, as with a grumpily funny baby (Chen) whom we first meet in utero and follow into life. But this sharply observant, sometimes poignant, grimly comic play is too scattershot to gather force as it goes on.

Before the 'Succession' Finale, Five Questions

Some fraught plot lines that viewers might see resolved as the series reaches its end.

By JENNIFER VINEYARD

CLAUDETTE BARIUS/HBO

With few exceptions, the hit HBO series "Succession" has followed the "Seinfeld" model of "no hugging, no learning," as the ultra-privileged Roy siblings seek to replace their late father, Logan (Brian Cox), at the top of the Waystar Royco media empire.

For some reason — despite their narcissism, recklessness and stunning lack of personal growth — we really care about what happens to them and their lackeys anyway. Who will emerge victorious? And at what personal cost?

Now, with the 90-minute series finale set to air on Sunday, we seem poised to receive some kind of answer, as the long corporate death match winds to an end. But before it does, the show still has plenty of questions to answer.

Can even a supersize conclusion cover them all? Here are several we would like to see addressed.

What will America decide?

In hopes of helping secure their own leadership positions, Kendall and Roman Roy (Jeremy Strong and Kieran Culkin) directed Waystar's right-wing news network ATN to call victory for the far-right presidential candidate Jeryd Mencken (Justin Kirk), who indicated he would squash the GoJo deal. But those burned ballots in Milwaukee mean the election is still contested, and the Democratic candidate, Daniel Jiménez (Elliot Villar), still has a shot at the White House. How long will the count drag on? Will we see a resolution?

Whatever the outcome, the top Waystar brass are vulnerable. If the Roys' motivations for calling the election for Mencken come to light, ATN may not survive. (Then again, real-world parallels suggest it might.) Perhaps no one is so vulnerable as Tom, who as the head of ATN may once again be at risk of becoming the sacrificial lamb, a fate he barely escaped during the company's cruise line scandal.

The finale may need a significant time jump to wrap all of this up. As for the lasting damage of the assault on American democracy? That may be a tough one for any single TV episode to parse.

What will the board decide?

Logan once said that life was a "fight for a knife in the mud." If his children want to control whatever company emerges from the Waystar-GoJo negotiations — wresting it back from the tech mogul Lukas Matsson (Alexander Skarsgard) — they need to escalate their efforts, fast (and bring a gun to that knife fight).

None of the Roy siblings have secure positions or strong advocates. Kendall thought backing Mencken would ensure his later help in stopping the GoJo sale, which would help the Roy children keep the company. But Mencken seems poised to disregard that promise. Nor does Mencken seem to respect either of the co-C.E. Bros: Roman lost whatever currency he had after his meltdown at Logan's funeral. (Mencken calls him the Grim Weeper.) Kendall lost his with his obsequious approach to negotiation.

As things now stand, Mencken is considering approving GoJo's acquisition of Waystar if an American chief executive is attached, and neither of the brothers would make Matsson's shortlist. Their sister, Shiv (Sarah Snook), thinks she is in line, but Matsson hasn't agreed to that. If all Matsson wants is a useful pawn, he might be looking at Tom (Matthew Macfadyen), who is dedicated to the work and flexible in his loyalties, or Greg (Nicholas Braun), who will be easy to manipulate.

However the deal shakes out, there's no guarantee Matsson and the board want a member of the Roy family at all. They have plenty of reason not to. Given all the familial infighting and rash decision-making, the board could decide to install someone with real experience — maybe Gerri (J. Smith-Cameron) or Stewy (Arian Moayed).

Are Shiv and Tom salvageable?

Put another way, is the Shivorce off? Put still another way, can Shiv ever have it all — a high-powered career *and* a functional family? Whatever she does, she might have to pick some goals and commit. She is so busy flip-flopping on her various positions that it's hard to know where she really stands.

For example, is Shiv really so repulsed by Mencken? Or do her values lean left only when they don't interfere with her personal gain? Does Shiv want the GoJo deal only if it allows her to become chief executive, or will she support it under other leadership? Shiv assures Matsson that her impending motherhood is a nonissue — the way she describes it, she might as well put the kid up for adoption. But does she really want to follow in the footsteps of her neglectful, abusive father?

Shiv needs to make these decisions — about the person and the parent she wants to be — before she can consider reconciliation with her estranged husband, Tom; otherwise their relationship will be doomed by its toxic dynamics, however the corporate and political gamesmanship plays out.

Will Kendall's past run him over?

In each season finale so far, Kendall has had to come to terms, on some level, with the drowning death of a waiter he helped cause at his sister's wedding. The news of his involvement has yet to become public; if or when it does, it will be a doozy, though at this point "when" seems more likely than "if."

His siblings know the truth; he confessed to them at the end of Season 3. Cousin Greg is also privy to a few details since it was he who connected Kendall with the waiter. And Marcia (Hiam Abbas) and her son, Amir (Darius Homayoun), who were present during the aftermath of the accident, are a threat to Kendall's alibi.

And then there is Logan's former bodyguard Colin (Scott Nicholson), who helped cover it up. This might be why Kendall was so concerned in Episode 9 to learn that Colin was in therapy — and felt the need to let him know that he knew. We haven't heard much lately about the podcast investigating the curse of the Roy family, but we should remember that whatever confidentiality agreements might be in place, secrets have a way of leaking.

Top, the Roy siblings Kendall, Shiv and Roman (from left, Jeremy Strong, Sarah Snook and Kieran Culkin). Above, Justin Kirk, as the presidential candidate Jeryd Mencken.

Whither Greg?

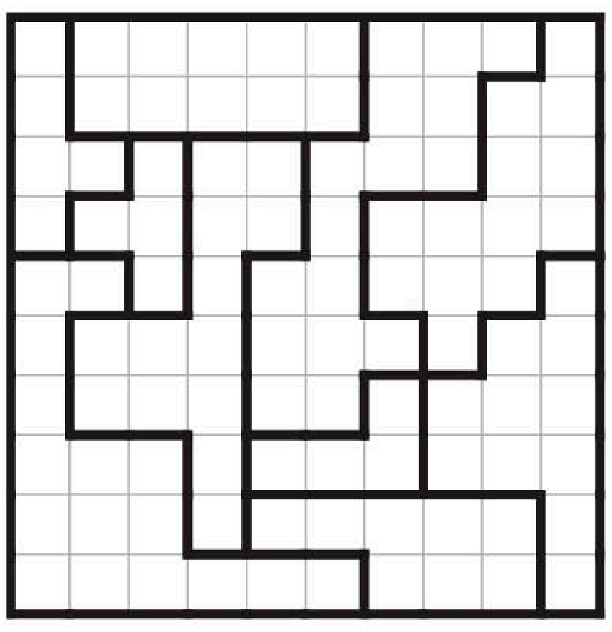
Cousin Greg, a.k.a. the younger Disgusting Brother, sold his soul a long time ago, and it has secured him face time with some of the most important people in the world. But do any of them respect him? (We can answer that ourselves: no.)

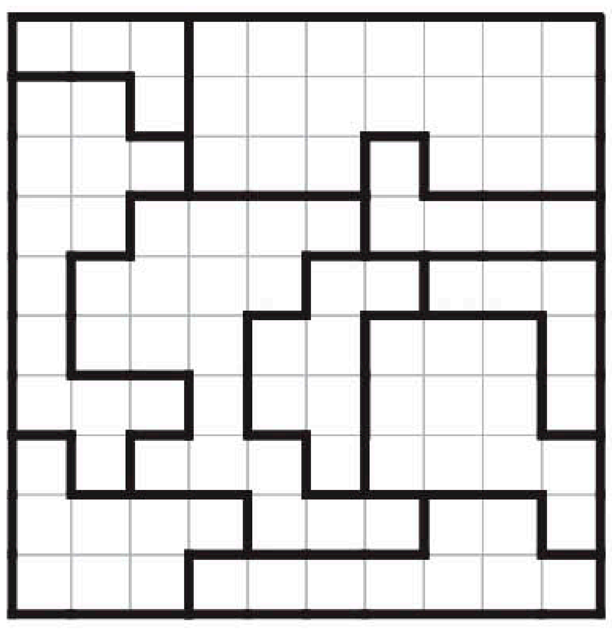
It might be that their — and our — disregard for Greg is part of the point of "Succession": He defines failing upward. At first, his disarming meekness made him a good audience surrogate, his mediocrity a good source of comic relief. But then he began to master the skills essential to this rarefied world of relentless ambition, including blackmail, perjury and betrayal. Now he gets invited to every party, though no one quite seems to want him there.

This season, he took it to the next level by helping facilitate ATN's premature call of the election. If it all blows up, he seems unlikely to go down with Tom, not least because he knows where the bodies are buried going back to when Tom ran the cruise division.

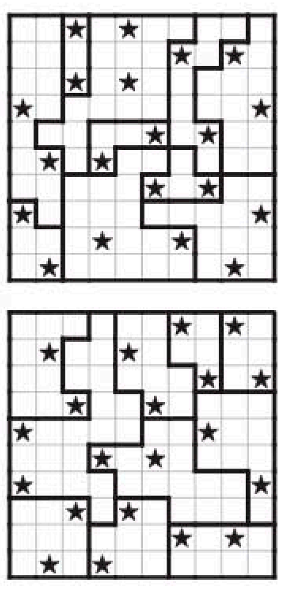
If Matsson succeeds, he might see the advantage of having a Roy ally who isn't as contentious as Kendall, Roman or Shiv — a Roy he can control. At the very least, Matsson and Greg make better photo ops together, both being well over six feet tall. Leadership positions have been decided over less.

Two Not Touch





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES



Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

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Wit Twister

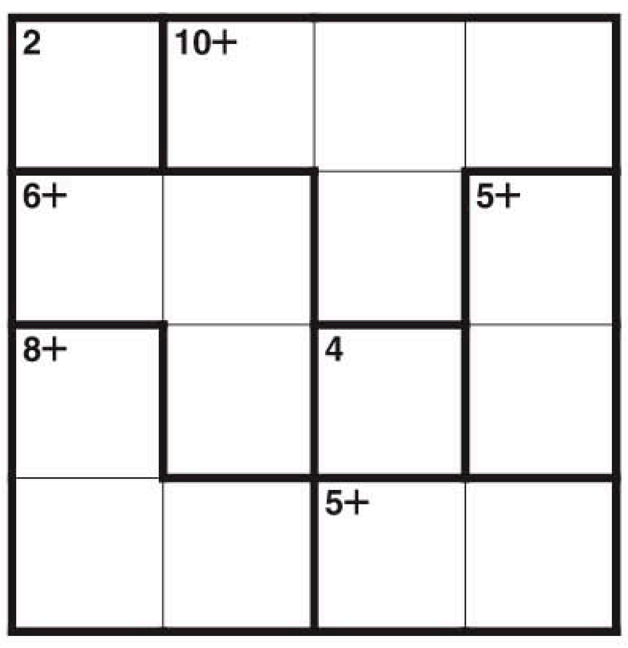
My fourth Manhattan and its _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ cherry downed,
I prayed the blues musicians would conclude their dismal set.
Alas, with _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ but with energy unbound,
They played _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ till dawn, as if to win a bet.

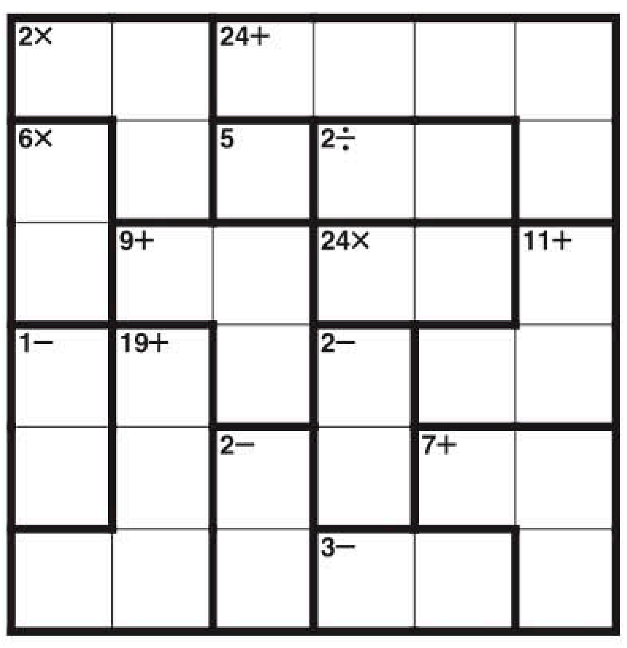
Complete the verse with words that are anagrams of each other. Each underline represents a letter.

PUZZLE BY STUART CLELAND

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER Sleigh, tray

KenKen





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES

4	3	2	1
1	4	3	2
2	1	4	3
3	2	1	4

2	5	3	4	6	1
5	3	1	2	4	6
4	2	5	6	1	3
1	4	6	5	3	2
6	1	2	3	5	4
3	6	4	1	2	5

Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

For more games: www.nytimes.com/games

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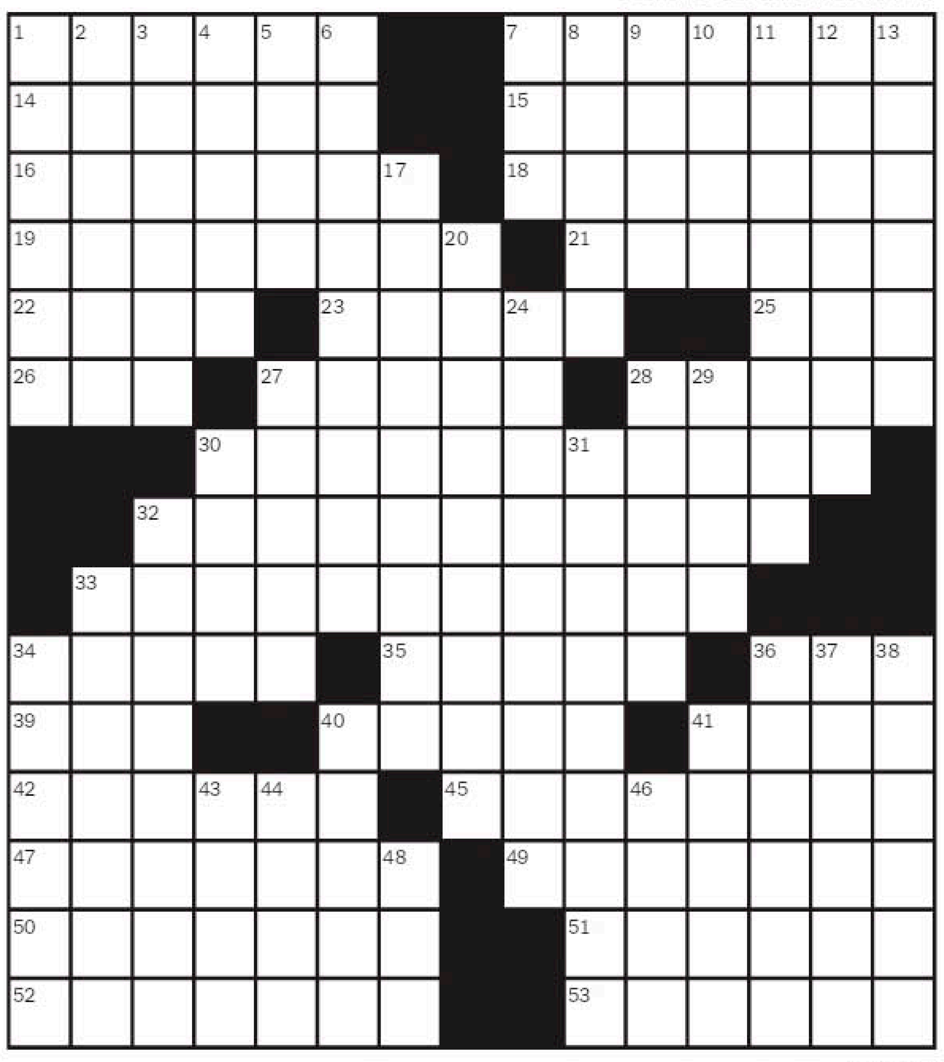
Crossword | Edited by Will Shortz

PUZZLE BY SAMUEL SMALLEY



5/27/23

ACROSS

1 Creates by artificial means
7 Bit of marathon attire
14 New Year's Day, informally
15 Rapacious cry
16 What's closed at closing time
18 Some toy carriers
19 Pop corn?
21 Achieve one's due honestly
22 Diner owner in "Garfield"
23 Like a lion
25 Uplifting offering
26 Stretch (out)
27 Start of a schedule
28 Took some courses
30 Impossible to get into
32 Bad things to lose track of?
33 Squee-inducing
34 Traveling sorts
35 They can regenerate their eyes, hearts and spinal cords
36 Still
39 Pet sound
40 Like hams
41 Biblical mother of Zebulun
42 Impediment to picking things up
45 Scientists' discards
47 More than one
49 Sarcastic response to a first-world-problem complaint
50 Distribute
51 Help line?
52 Some credit opportunities
53 California-based soft drink company

DOWN

1 It's a treat
2 Not going anywhere, say
3 "Is it OK if I leave?"
4 "The Wire" actress Sohn
5 Biblical preposition
6 When restaurants are busiest
7 Campus V.I.P.s
8 Where to get the ball rolling, maybe
9 Actress DuVall of "21 Grams"
10 Certain dignitary
11 Major infractions of etiquette
12 Very clear, say, colloquially
13 One-upped
17 Pod holder
20 Steal
24 Spelunker's challenge
27 Gets on board
28 Bits and pieces
29 They have their pluses and minuses
30 Role played by a dog with a bigger salary than some human actors in the same film
31 Political heavyweight
32 Cover for a criminal organization
33 "So we're all on the same page ... "
34 "LMAO"
36 Approval often uttered impatiently
37 Patronize a restaurant
38 Largest country without an official language, for short
40 French toast
41 Doodlebug, e.g.
43 Going without, in a way
44 Some launches, for short
46 Response of shock, in one spelling
48 Subjects of some conspiracy theories, in brief

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

O	M	A	N	I		S	E	G	A		S	N	U	B
V	E	R	Y	C	L	E	V	E	R		C	O	D	E
A	M	I	T	O	O	L	A	T	E		H	I	D	E
L	O	L		M	I	L	L	S		P	O	S	E	R
			P	E	N	S		B	A	L	L	E	R	S
H	U	B	R	I	S		N	O	M	A	A	M		
A	P	R	O	N		M	E	R	C	Y	R	U	L	E
S	T	U	M	P		A	W	E		E	S	S	A	Y
H	O	T	D	E	S	K	E	D		R	H	I	N	E
		E	R	A	S	E	R		C	H	I	C	K	S
A	F	F	E	C	T	S		S	L	A	P			
P	R	O	S	E		L	I	M	I	T		B	O	A
A	I	R	S		N	O	T	O	N	E	W	O	R	D
R	A	C	E		O	V	E	R	G	R	A	Z	E	D
T	R	E	S		M	E	M	E		S	H	O	O	S

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LUCA LO PINTO

Want to Be An Artist? You Can Be This One.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

"It does, to me, represent a common career arc," Triple Canopy's editor, Alexander Provan, said by phone, "from desperately working to establish yourself as an artist and as an individual who is representative of your own body of work to exhausting the possibility of that identity, in work and perhaps in life."

The contract lays it all out, in terms as simultaneously dull and amusing as you might expect, dryly defining terms like artist, work and practice. The buyer gets Bader's practice: that is, his art world reputation and the right to use the name on new works. Bader won't legally change his name, and can use it when he becomes something new: television host, art dealer, comedian, etc. If all goes well, Bader sheds the art world skin he's been wearing for 20 years.

The project follows in a century-old tradition of immaterial and conceptual art that began as soon as Marcel Duchamp proposed an ordinary urinal (titled "Fountain") for a 1917 exhibition under a pseudonym. "He created a new thought for that object," said Duchamp, defending the fictitious artist, "R. Mutt."

Beginning in 1959, Yves Klein sold "zones of immaterial pictorial sensibility," in which a collector got a receipt for a certain amount of empty space. Conceptualists like Lawrence Weiner and Robert Barry, in the 1960s and '70s, opposed the commercialization of art by making art that sometimes consisted of mere description and didn't have to take physical form at all.

And in the age of the NFT, artists like Beeple and Pak have mastered the art of getting people to pay (into the tens of millions in Beeple's case) for artworks so ethereal that even most in the art world couldn't explain what they actually consist of.

While not quite a household name, Bader leaves behind an enviable career and has produced an impressively varied and cerebral body of work. He has appeared in career-making exhibitions, like the Whitney Biennial (in 2014) and the Venice Biennale (in 2019), and had solo shows at institutions like MoMA PS1. He is represented by four respected galleries: Andrew Kreps in New York, Blum & Poe in Los Angeles, Sadie Coles in London and Franco Noero in Turin, Italy.

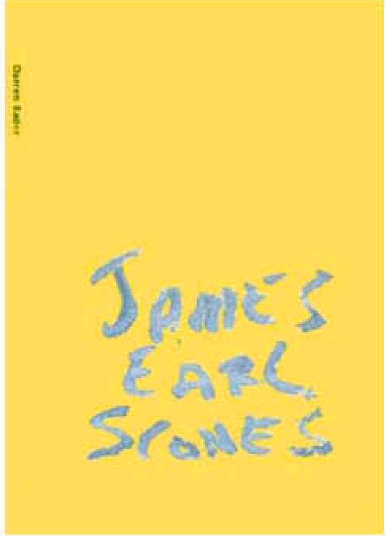
In a 2018 profile in T Magazine, Nikil Saval wrote that Bader is "renowned . . . for his elevation of the profane and ridiculous into the realm of high art." All the same, his self-deprecating description on the Kreps gallery website refers to him as "an aging sculpture/literature brand working in AR, elision, found object, humor, permutation/chance, poem, rhetoric, and video."

So when we met at a bar in New York's Chelsea neighborhood, the question was obvious: Why do this? "One, this is not meant to be an adieu," he told me. "But two, there is a surfeit of identity. Everyone has an aggrandized 'me.' And three, there's a bottleneck of creative talent.

"The project makes fun of this codified notion: When did the term 'art practice' even start?" he said. "It's playfully rancorous." He added in an email: "It was just one of those semi-serendipitous ideas. I think it might have been when thinking about dentists selling their practice." Partly, he's vexed by the dubious concept of the very kind of art world brand name he's selling off.

A few examples illustrate the span of his ouevre. His first book, "James Earl Scones" (2005), contains an abundance of proposals for doomed projects. In one, he asks the director of Rome's Capitoline Museums for permission to ride naked on the famous ancient Roman equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, ensuring the director that "this performance is an act of sheer reverence for both the continuum of Western art and the inexorable presence of history."

In his 2012 book "77 and/or 58 and/with 19," he describes the piece "Motorcycle on Birth Control," in which the buyer would drop the pills, as prescribed, into the vehicle's gas tank. Characteristically for Bader, it combines two objects in an ambiguous way, perhaps feminizing a cliché of masculinity, perhaps aborting the fantasies of freedom to which the motorcycle gives birth.



A few years after Lou Reed's death, Bader invited women whose names appear in Reed's songs to convene for an installation, "Candy says, Lisa says, Stephanie says, Caroline says," top, at Christine König Galerie in Vienna in 2014. Above, books by Bader: "James Earl Scones," top, and "77 and/or 58 and/with 19."

Behind the humor, the artist sees higher purposes. When the Calder Foundation awarded him the Calder Prize in 2013 ("His installations often take on a strange character," the Atelier Calder acknowledged) and asked how his work extends Calder's legacy, Bader replied, "In questioning what the limits/definition of sculpture could be."

If it strikes the average person as absurd to put a price on a practice, he's interested in how we place value on things, including art objects and money. In a 2014 show at Kreps, some pieces consisted solely of monetary exchanges. For example, for $25,800, you could get the piece "$15,031," while some works were the other way around: for $4,200, you could buy "$16,937." (Kreps told me with a laugh that he admonished his staff: "We simply cannot sell these works. Maybe he should buy them all.")

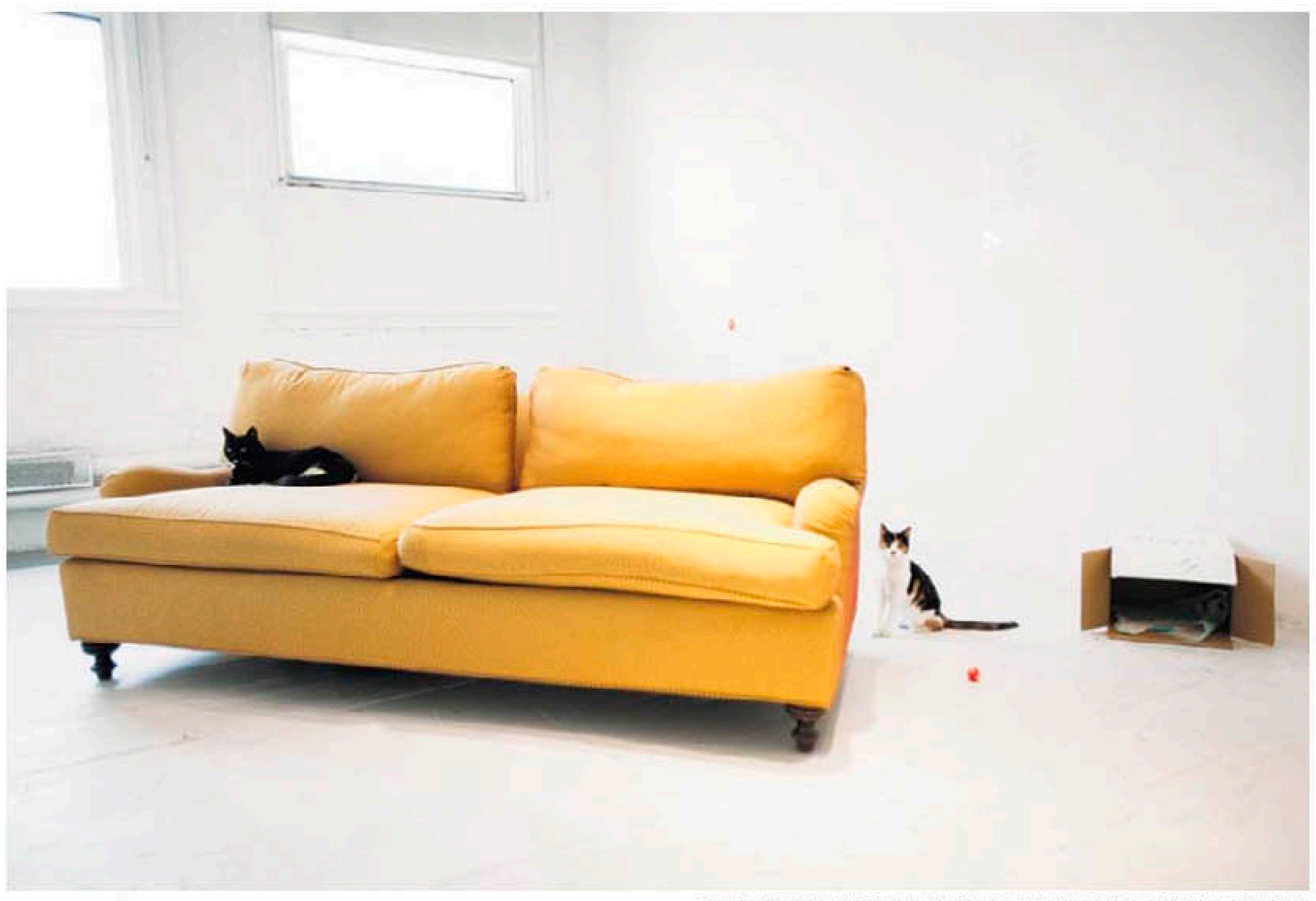
Some past works consist principally of instructions for how to interact with a work, even as they challenge the way we make some objects valuable while we discard others. Regarding the found object sculptures in the 2014 Kreps show "To Have and To Hold," some as insignificant as a bottle cap, the collector was charged to live with the object, collect more just like it, destroy or lose the original object (optional), then begin to give the accumulated objects away.

Jeff Poe, of Blum & Poe, has made his peace with Bader's decision. In a phone conversation, Poe remembered his awe on first seeing Bader's work, in his 2012 show "Images" at MoMA PS1: "You walk in and you see a couch and a couple of cats and two burritos on a windowsill, and, down the hall, a perfect grid of plinths with fruit on top. It was such a messy, precise, historically informed and hilarious show that it deeply upset me. If Duchamp and Phyllis Diller had a child, it would be Darren Bader.

"I've come to the conclusion that this is completely in keeping with his trajectory," Poe added. "He's embraced the wrong. He came onstage breaking the fourth wall. Now he's exiting through a trap door."

But if anything is "wrong," Bader says, it's the state of the art world he's leaving. In an online journal on the site where he's offering the practice for sale, Bader expressed disgust at the dealer Barbara Gladstone telling The Times that the late collector Emily Fisher Landau's habit of not buying artwork as speculation was "a wonderfully old-fashioned tradition."

Bader asks, incredulously, "What world have I been a part of for two decades?"



VIA DARREN BADER AND MOMA PS1; PHOTO BY MATTHEW SEPTIMUS

VIA DARREN BADER AND MOMA PS1; PHOTO BY MATTHEW SEPTIMUS

VIA DARREN BADER AND MOMA PS1; PHOTO BY MATTHEW SEPTIMUS

VIA ANDREW KREPS, NEW YORK; PHOTO BY JEAN VONG

Above, from top: "Reincarnation of Ronald Reagan and Cat Made Out of Crab Meat" in which the felines were available for adoption; burritos with instructions on their placement; "Fruits, Vegetables; Fruit and Vegetable Salad," which included salads made twice a week from the produce; Left, "To Have and To Hold."

Literature as Defiance in an Era of Nationalism

Burhan Sönmez, the Kurdish Turkish novelist who is the president of PEN International, on the role of art in an authoritarian society.

By JASON FARAGO

ISTANBUL — The momentous Turkish presidential election, whose second round will take place on Sunday, has more than just geopolitical consequences; it is a watershed for culture as well. Since 2016, after a failed coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the government here has cracked down on artists, writers, filmmakers and academics, who have experienced censorship, job losses and a climate of fear.

For the novelist Burhan Sönmez, who is part of the country's ethnic Kurdish minority, the upheavals of the Erdogan years are only the latest chapter in an ongoing struggle between Turkish power and Turkish art.

Born outside Ankara in 1965, where his first language was Kurdish, he worked as a human rights lawyer but went into exile in Britain after a police assault. He has written five novels, including the prizewinning "Istanbul Istanbul," "Labyrinth" and "Stone and Shadow," newly out in English by Other Press. His novels delve into imprisonment and memory, with echoes of Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Jorge Luis Borges.

Sönmez now lives in Istanbul and Cambridge, and in 2021 he was named president of PEN International, where he has been an outspoken defender of freedom of expression in Turkey and elsewhere.

I spoke to Sönmez over video a few days after the first round of the Turkish general election, in which Erdogan finished a half-point shy of an absolute majority. This interview has been edited and condensed.

Istanbul has always been a city of arrivals. When did you first come here?

During the military-coup era, the 1980s. I was born and grew up in a small village in central Turkey. It's in the middle of the countryside, like a desert village, without electricity. I moved to Istanbul to study law, and the next phase of my life began after I went to exile in Britain. So now I can combine those different spaces — small village, big Istanbul and then Europe. They all come together and sometimes they separate.

Frequently, there's an indeterminacy of setting in your novels, not only of geography but of time. You rarely use the obvious tells of technology or current affairs that some authors use to ground a reader in time.

Particularly in my novel "Istanbul Istanbul," I didn't state a specific year, or period, when the events take place. When people read it, everyone feels that this is the story of their generation.

For better and for worse!

Yes. But, you know, only a naïve writer would feel proud of that. You would say, "OK, I am reflecting the feelings of different generations in a single novel." In fact, it comes from the society itself in Turkey. Every generation has gone through the same suffering, the same problems, same oppression, same pain. So it is not a literary talent, actually, to bring all those times into a single story.

In "Istanbul Istanbul," the narrators are prisoners, held without charge in underground cells, who tell one another stories. What their stories sketch in aggregate is a kind of dream-state Istanbul, where freedom is always abbreviated but with which freethinkers and artists remain in love.

This really started in the 1850s, when the first liberal intellectuals were oppressed by the Ottoman sultan and went into European exile. When we look at this history over time, 150 or 170 years, we see that, with every decade, governments used the same methods of oppression against writers, journalists, academics, intellectuals.

But the tradition of oppression also created a tradition of resistance. And now look: After 20 years of the rule of Erdogan, still nearly half of society is against him strongly. We haven't finished. This is partly our history of resistance.

Turkey, like America, has a strong political fault line between the cities and the countryside. But your novels have crisscrossed from Istanbul to rural Anatolia and back.

Especially in my last novel, "Stone and Shadow," I wrote about this, comparing the eastern, middle and also the western part of Turkey over the last 100 years.

What's the difference between life in a small village in rural Turkey and in Istanbul? You could say it's the difference between living in a small hut with a gas lamp and living on a street with flashing neon lights. Two different worlds, two different eras.

But you should understand: Istanbul is now also part of rural Turkey. There has been a huge migration from the countryside. When I went to study in Istanbul, the population was about five million. Now it's 17 million. It's not easy for a big city to create a new citizen, a new cultural spirit.

On that subject, one of the most disturbing themes of this election has been the demonization around refugees. I wonder how it sounds to you, as a former refugee yourself.

The sad thing for Turkey now, we've seen a new rise of nationalism — in the color of racism, actually — against immigrants. There's open racism against Syrians and Afghan people in Turkey. And every side, every political platform, has different ways of legitimizing this.

Right-wingers say, "These people are underdeveloped Arabs. This is a backward race." From secular progressive people, you hear, "Oh, they're right-wing Islamist militants. They are here to support Erdogan, and to invade our country, to turn it into an Islamic republic." In every case, racism or hatred of immigrants is on the top of the agenda.

Nationalism now dominates almost every political movement.

HATICE SAHIN

Burhan Sönmez says in Turkey "the tradition of oppression also created a tradition of resistance."

Yet there's a rare lightness and freedom to your characterization of these political themes. "Labyrinth," the story of a musician who loses his memory after jumping into the Bosporus, barely hints at the upheavals of the Erdogan years, when the amnesiac sees a torn poster of the president and confuses him for a sultan.

We know the difference between art and journalism. Journalism speaks directly. Speaking this different language of art, we feel that we are no longer in the field of society, of politics. A political matter or a historical fact is just a color in my novel. That is real power. When I write a novel, I feel that I unite the past and the future. Because the past is a story and the future is a dream.

Has there been a self-censorship of artists and writers in Turkey over the last few years?

Well, first, every year more than 500 new Turkish novels are being published. When I was at the university, the number of new novels published in Turkish was about 15 or 20. That's an enormous difference.

With the young generation, I see that they are brave. Despite all this oppression, this danger of going to prison or being unemployed, young people are writing fearlessly. They are writing about Kurdish issues, about women's issues, about L.G.B.T. issues, about political crimes in Turkey.

Hundreds of writers are like this: writing openly, and at some point a bit dangerously, for themselves. This is something of which we should be proud.

As president of PEN International, you have a particularly close view of the state of free expression. Have things gotten any better in Turkey since the crackdowns of 2016-17, when thousands of academics and journalists were arrested or purged?

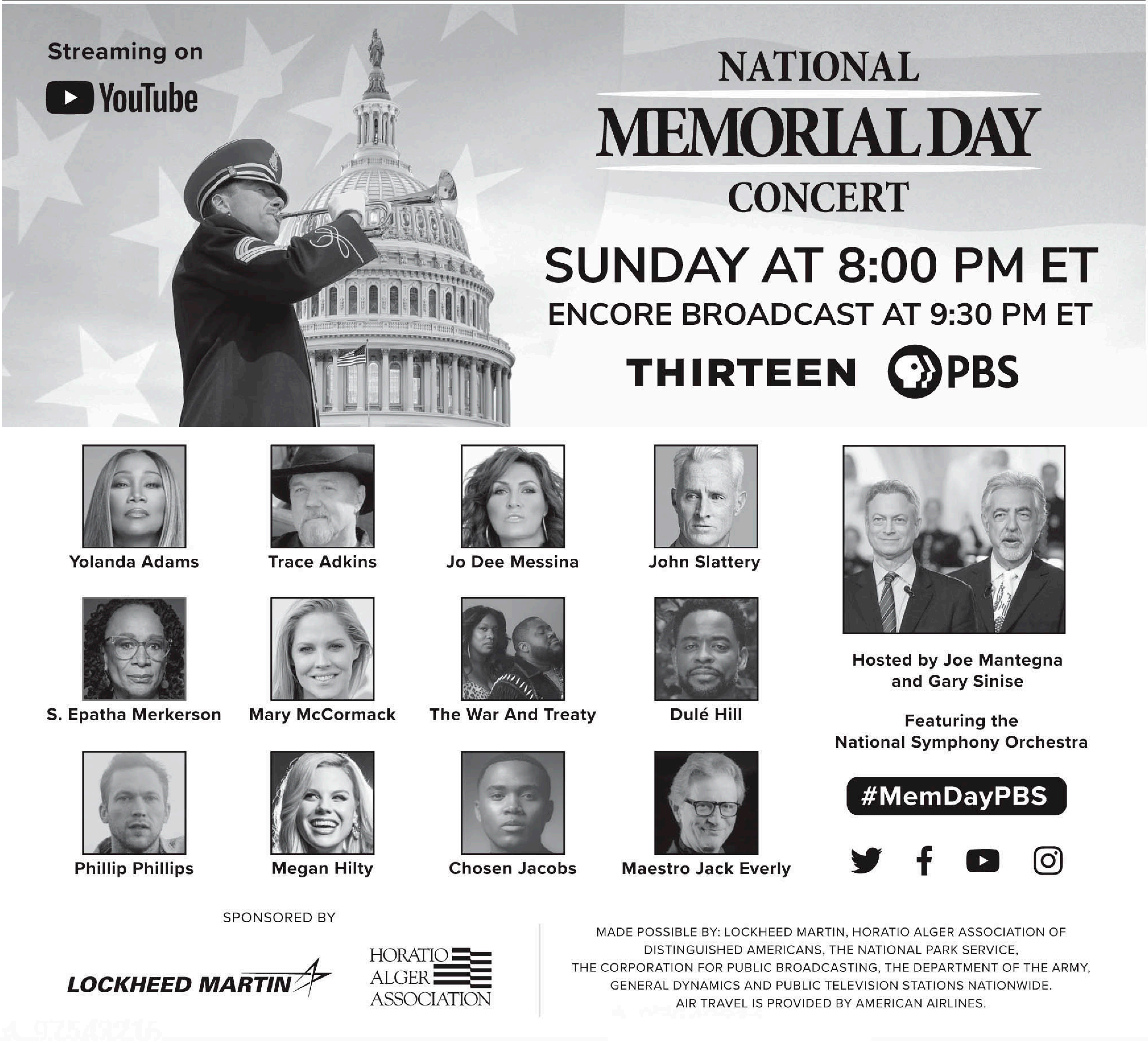
No, no, it's not better. In Turkey, we never got to distinguish between bad and good. It was always: bad or worse.

In Turkey, PEN International has been supporting writers in prison. For myself, being a lawyer, I have the opportunity to go to prisons. Anytime I go to Turkey, I use this advantage. I go and I see Selahattin Demirtas, or Osman Kavala, so many people. It is sad to see great people are still in prison.

But also it is great to see that we have solidarity. At the end of my novel "Istanbul Istanbul," I used an epigraph by a Persian Sufi from the Middle Ages. He says, "Hell is not the place where we suffer, it's the place where no one hears us suffering." I know that if I am arrested, I will never be left alone.

I probably shouldn't ask you what you expect when Turks vote in the presidential runoff on May 28.

No, you should ask. I think we'll win. I'm too optimistic in life, and very naïve.



ANASTASIA TSIOULCAS | MUSIC REVIEW

A Trombone Slides Into the Philharmonic Spotlight

Animated by percussion, Chick Corea's last finished work provides a star turn.

CHRIS LEE

Marin Alsop conducted the U.S. premiere of Chick Corea's Trombone Concerto on Thursday night with Joseph Alessi, left, and the New York Philharmonic.

New York Philharmonic
CRITIC'S PICK
This program repeats Saturday at David Geffen Hall, Manhattan; nyphil.org.

THERE IS NOT exactly a wealth of great concertos written for the trombone, that largely unheralded stalwart of the brass section. (Insert sad trombone sound here.) If anyone is going to change this state of affairs, it's Joseph Alessi, the principal trombone of the New York Philharmonic. He's an idol of legions of brass players for his rich tone, exemplary phrasing and virtuosic precision.

In 1992, Alessi premiered Christopher Rouse's Pulitzer Prize-winning Trombone Concerto. Almost three decades later, Alessi asked the widely loved jazz keyboardist and composer Chick Corea, who was enmeshed with classical music throughout his life, to create a trombone concerto. That work received its U.S. premiere at the Philharmonic on Thursday evening, performed by Alessi under the baton of Marin Alsop, another artist who easily code-switches between jazz and classical idioms.

The premiere was originally scheduled for the orchestra's 2020-21 season. But with the onset of the pandemic, those plans were abandoned. Corea died of cancer in February 2021, and the concerto stands as his last finished work. (A recording, with Alessi as soloist, is scheduled for release this November on the Parma record label.)

The four-movement work features a huge battery of percussion instruments — including gongs, marimba, xylophone and African cowbells — that lend a new palette of shimmering colors to the orchestra. And it shows off the marvel of Alessi's technique and musicianship: in the first movement's bluesy slides, in the lyrical tenderness of a second-movement waltz and in devilish 16th-note runs in "Hysteria," the third movement, which Corea wrote as pandemic lockdowns were just beginning. A final tango draws together the soloist and orchestra before allowing Alessi to finish triumphantly on a series of high F sharps, venturing into trumpet territory.

Corea had intended to play the prominent piano part in early performances. Instead, John Dickson, who orchestrated the concerto, is performing it with the Philharmonic. As an encore, Alessi introduced Dickson and they played a brief homage to Corea written by Dickson. It was a heartfelt adieu to their mutual friend and collaborator.

The program opened with Samuel Barber's Symphony No. 1. Written when Barber was just 25, it's a mature wonder of a work, woefully under-programmed. (The last time the Philharmonic played it was during the Clinton administration.) Among its pleasures are declarative brass, crisp percussion, richly colored string writing and an exquisitely lyrical third movement.

The New York Philharmonic musicians have finally relaxed into trusting the acoustics in David Geffen Hall. Gone is their urge to push hard to be heard — a necessity before the renovation. Instead, they now luxuriate in the chance to sculpt sound in space.

Alsop celebrated that ability in 12 selected movements from Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet" Suites Nos. 1, 2 and 3, beginning with the fiery opening blasts of "The Montagues and the Capulets" and ending with the tear-stained "Death of Juliet." Alsop drew out all the sharp accents and quick turns in "The Death of Tybalt" and made the most of the silvery charm of the "Aubade."

Her vivid sense of color and rhythmic clarity framed Prokofiev's ballet music as an exciting complement to the Barber Symphony, written the same year as some of the Prokofiev selections. This kind of creative juxtaposition, in which one piece illuminates another, is the essence of good concert programming.

SETH COLTER WALLS | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

The Perfect Harmony of a Flute Family Gathering

With a spread of composers and their instruments, there is always something to savor.

JENNIFER TAYLOR

At Zankel Hall, Anna Thorvaldsdottir's "Ubique" featured, from left, the cellist Katinka Kleijn, the pianist Cory Smythe, the flutist Claire Chase and the cellist Seth Parker Woods.

THE FLUTIST CLAIRE CHASE is a community builder. You can see this in "Density 2036," her 24-year project to commission a new repertoire for her instrument. And you can sense a communal spirit when she offers gratitude to audiences who show up to several gigs in a row.

This week, Chase voiced her appreciation to those who had attended multiple concerts in her recent 10th-anniversary "Density" retrospective at the Kitchen's temporary location, in the Westbeth complex, and Zankel Hall.

"It's a lot of flute," she acknowledged on Wednesday at the Kitchen. (Listeners beyond New York can experience something similar, with most of "Density" available to hear in recordings gathered on Chase's Bandcamp profile.)

True. But across two programs that night, Chase offered a generous spread of composers and their respective approaches to the flute family. As a result, the music never felt staid. You could enjoy the breathy qualities of pieces by Matana Roberts and Ann Cleare, as well as the harder-grooving material of works by Wang Lu and Craig Taborn.

Each installment of "Density" has a running time of about an hour. Some programs feature multiple pieces; some focus on just one. When the latter happens, there is an added sense of risk-taking, for listeners as well as for Chase. If a composition doesn't hit strongly — well, that's the whole hour.

That was my experience on Thursday night, when Anna Thorvaldsdottir's "Ubique" premiered at Zankel. This work, like many in "Density" more than a mere flute solo, drew on the instrumental talents of Chase, the pianist Cory Smythe and the cellists Katinka Kleijn and Seth Parker Woods. (As was often the case during the retrospective, Levy Lorenzo steered the use of electronic sounds, and Nicholas Houfek provided subtle lighting design.)

In the early going of "Ubique," Thorvaldsdottir writes ear-catching passages: flurries of rhythmically dynamic piano-and-flute passages, and some winning two-cello drones. But as these elements were reprised in the second half, it sounded like the material was being stretched, without much new added to the bargain.

At the other end of the spectrum, Chase's willingness to give a composer an entire hour also paid dramatically satisfying dividends in the premiere of the improvising pianist and composer Taborn's "Busy Griefs and Endangered Charms" at the Kitchen. It was one of the best shows I've experienced this season.

Taborn is storied in contemporary jazz, with pianism of delicacy, intricacy and power. His 2011 debut solo recording for ECM, "Avenging Angel," is among the best piano works of this century, and in recent compositions for his Junk Magic ensemble, he has also been edging into chamber-like arrangements.

So, Chase was wise to ask Taborn for a program-length "Density" piece. "Griefs" placed him in a quartet alongside Chase, the clarinetist Joshua Rubin and the percussionist Susie Ibarra. (Ibarra, also a key presence on jazz stages, has also recently performed the works of Pauline Oliveros with Chase.)

"Griefs" begins with chiming synth figures on a digital loop, plus some thick, doleful acoustic piano harmonies; as is his regular practice, Taborn manipulated a small electronic manual that rested atop his piano. After Rubin entered on bass clarinet, Taborn's articulation of the opening material accelerated, though the somber mood remained intact.

It took five minutes for Chase to enter on a flute — but once she did, Taborn's piece moved from its griefs to its charms. Across the hour, Chase was given space to partner with every other player in duos, all of which took advantage of Taborn's invitations to improvise. With Rubin, she steered unison lines that gradually branched into rhythmically independent cries; the sneaky effect had the quality of Taborn's own pianism. With Ibarra, she reveled in funk-laced passages. And with Taborn, she collaborated on long-lined melodies and freer-sounding improvisations.

Taborn himself took a few dramatic solos of his own, which were rambunctious and lyrical in equal measure. But he was also silent for significant stretches, listening closely to the other musical partnerships he'd set in motion. There was always something to savor.

After the concert, I asked Taborn whether I'd missed out on any other similar

In a concert presenting so many varied approaches, the music never feels staid.

chamber music of his. He mentioned some two-piano pieces that he has developed with Smythe — the pianist in the Thorvaldsdottir premiere — but said that "Griefs" was the first such piece of his at that scale. (And on June 24 at National Sawdust, Taborn will premiere the first part of a work in progress, for string quartet and his own piano.)

When Chase gets around to recording and releasing this part of "Density," Taborn's work deserves to be a big event in multiple music circles. For now, the premiere is emblematic of the kind of concert that Chase knows how to ask for, before any other classical music presenter. It's the kind of piece that can only be commissioned by a soloist who is a close listener to the broad community of living American composers. And that's a trait for which audiences are rightly grateful.

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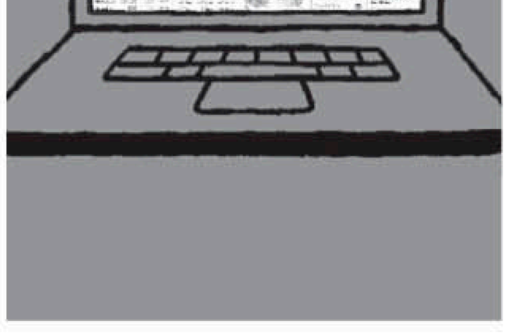


A Singer's Essential Tunes

By BEN SISARIO

Like all the greatest pop icons, Tina Turner, who died Wednesday at 83, had more than one life.

She started off as an R&B shouter and inexhaustible dancer who, alongside her husband Ike, put on the most exhilarating live show this side of James Brown. Then she was a rock heroine who toured with the Rolling Stones and served as the Who's Acid Queen. And finally she became the ultimate survivor — the abused woman who left her man in the dust and, without apologies, claimed a crown all her own.

Here are some of Tina Turner's greatest musical moments, on record and on film.

'A FOOL IN LOVE' (1960)
Ike & Tina Turner

Ike and Tina's early R&B hits are electrifying moments of raw musical power, but in retrospect they are also deeply creepy in their lyrical content. The duo's first single introduces Tina's larger-than-life howl and has her sing about a troubled relationship in which her man mistreats her and "got me smilin' while my heart is in pain," yet she still promises to "do anything he wants me to." Those words were written by Ike Turner, who has sole credit as the songwriter.

'I IDOLIZE YOU' (1960)
Ike & Tina Turner

More strange and uncomfortable lyrics: Tina professes not love but idolatry, and says that in return, "just a little bit attention you know will see me through." Tina's guttural cry atop a walking bass line was the sexiest, most unfiltered sound in music at the time, but it is all but impossible to hear these songs now without wincing at the horror show Tina would later describe about her marriage to Ike.

'IT'S GONNA WORK OUT FINE' (1961)
Ike & Tina Turner

The biggest hit of Ike & Tina's early years — it went to No. 2 on Billboard's R&B chart and was Top 20 pop — is a lighter back-and-forth routine about a couple persevering through their troubles. Again, eww. But at least this time the song was not by Ike. It was written by Rose Marie McCoy along with Joe Seneca and James Lee, and the R&B duo Mickey & Sylvia were involved in the recording.

'RIVER DEEP — MOUNTAIN HIGH' (1966)
Ike & Tina Turner

Phil Spector had seen the Ike & Tina Turner Revue — their incredibly high-energy live show, featuring Tina singing and dancing with the backup Ikettes — and recorded this single, written by Spector with Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich, for his label, Philles. It tones down Tina's howls and replaces Ike's tight band with a somewhat hazy version of Spector's signature "wall of sound." The single was a flop, which caused the album of the same title to be delayed by three years in the United States.

'PROUD MARY' (1971)
Ike & Tina Turner

"We never ever do nothin' nice and easy. We always do it nice and rough." Thus Tina introduces her biggest hit with Ike, a rollicking Creedence Clearwater Revival remake that went to No. 4. After a stripped-down, "nice and easy" run through the first couple of verses, the full band, with horns and Ikettes, joins in to take it energetically to the finish line.

'NUTBUSH CITY LIMITS' (1973)
Ike & Tina Turner

Tina, as the sole credited songwriter, tells her own story for once, detailing her upbringing in rural Tennessee, where "you go to the field on weekdays and have a picnic on Labor Day." It's played as acid funk, with period-appropriate electric keyboards and a Moog solo. But the song is still a reverie, never imagining a life beyond the small-town simplicities.

'THE ACID QUEEN' (1975)

For the film version of the Who's "Tommy," Tina was cast as the Acid Queen, the "Gypsy" with a wild scream and quivering lips who uses sex and drugs to try to cure the boy. By this point, Tina was a world-famous sex symbol, and her name alone was shorthand for feminine power. It was also not long before she left Ike. But the world would not know her secret for years.

'WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT' (1984)

By the 1980s, Tina was in her 40s and long past Ike, and her brand was survival. The songs on "Private Dancer," her breakthrough solo album, were mostly written by men, but they perfectly fit the role of an independent woman who isn't resigned to being alone. "What's Love Got to Do With It" is the story of a woman with a broken heart who's tempted but afraid to try again with love, "a secondhand emotion."

'BETTER BE GOOD TO ME' (1984)

A confident and defiant demand to a man, this was co-written by Holly Knight and was originally released by her band Spider. But it has been Tina's song ever since, giving her a chance not only to declare "I don't have no use for what you loosely call the truth," but also to unleash her raspy roar with "*should I*?"

'WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER HERO (THUNDERDOME)' (1985)

Tina donned a white mane and postapocalyptic tribal garb for "Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome," in which she starred alongside Mel Gibson. The theme song is squeaky-clean '80s torch pop, though Tina keeps her costume on for the music video.

'THE BEST' (1989)

Originally recorded by Bonnie Tyler, "The Best" is a song of praise to a lover. But if you squint, or sing along as a fan, it could be a paean to Tina herself: "You're simply the best, better than all the rest."

WESLEY MORRIS | AN APPRAISAL

CHARLIE GATES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Tina Turner photographed at her home in Küsnacht, Switzerland, in 2019. Below, Turner performing in The Hague in 1982.

A Tornado and a Treasure: That Was Tina Turner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

singers — could belt. Ma Rainey, Big Mama Thornton, Big Maybelle, Baker, Mahalia Jackson, Sister Rosetta Tharpe. But Tina grew up around Pentecostals. She could scream. Loder makes the astute point that Turner arrived in 1960, near the dawn of amplified sound. They were made for each other.

Her first hit, with Ike Turner — the man who named her Tina after the white jungle queens of Saturday matinees, the man she was with a decade and a half, the man who for years put her down and beat her up — was called "A Fool in Love." The song uses inside-out call-and-response. The backing singers call the chorus, and Tina responds like this: "Yay-ay-hey-hey-heeyyy!" The magnitude of her wail and the amplitude of its womanly Blackness stops you cold. It paralyzes you with exhilaration. Mmm hmm: *That* energy.

And look, it did have . . . other . . . registers. She growled, panted, moaned, squealed, yipped. Everybody knows that she was fine-looking, but in the middle of a song, conventional beauty went out of the window. Black singers get it: You're practicing the art of stank. Sometimes to make *that* art, you need to be art, and Turner's face mid-song was art at its most arresting, ornate and original: It was Cubism. She could be flesh-wound raw and choir-loft ethereal. Take the time, in 1966, that Tina gave herself over to Phil Spector and wound up with "River Deep — Mountain High," one of the most triumphant studio moments of any great singer. She takes the title at its word. She's Sisyphus. After every chorus, she rerolls her love boulder, even across the bridge. There's tension, between her nature and Spector's; her sonic force and his symphonic, percussive Wall of Sound. He put a napkin in her lap, and she used it to mop her brow. (Ike hated that song.)

Turner could get her voice down so low, so sweaty, so sensual that she skipped right past suggestive. It was simply what it sounds like it was: that good pain. She could sound ready for, say, whatever pleasure was in store for her toward the end of the version of "Let Me Touch Your Mind" that's on "Live! The World of Ike & Tina," from 1973. Onstage, she, with Ike, transformed Otis Redding's weepy ballad "I've Been Loving You Too Long" into X-rated psychodrama that Tina had to bring herself to enjoy being part of. She had to find a way to sell it.

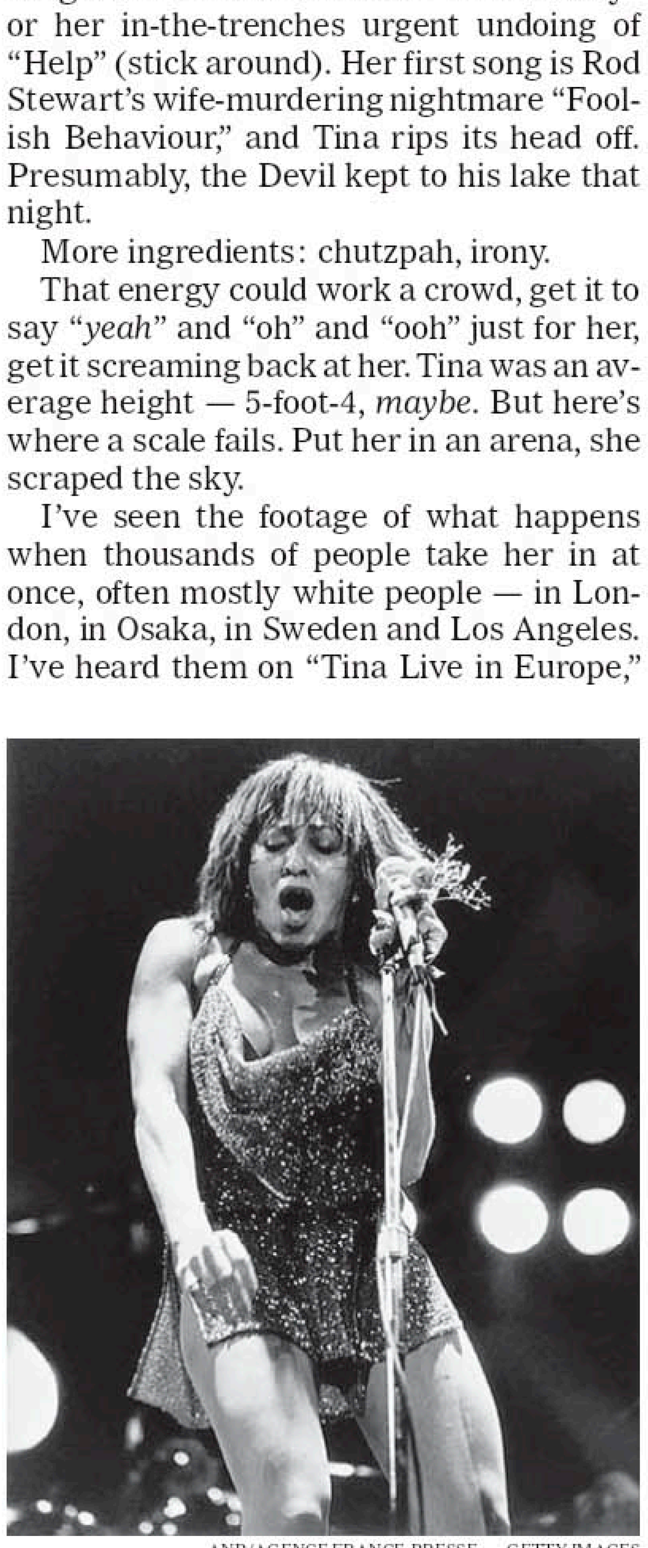
After her divorce became official in 1978, she hit the road and pushed more boulders. In 1982, the boulder stopped in Onoway, Alberta. My friend James is from Edmonton, and Turner's death on Wednesday shook loose a childhood memory of the time his parents drove to Onoway to see her play the Devil's Lake Corral. He sent a video. It's a mind-blowing feat of acrobatics, precision, adrenaline, heft, costuming. In other words, the usual. Turner is drenched before the halfway point. But the reason to bring this show up is how it starts.

Turner blows onto the stage wearing a sandy top and tights that would be a big deal in the town of Bedrock and a silky golden wig that looks like a Shih Tzu's rear. Her first song isn't her redefinition of "Proud Mary" or her in-the-trenches urgent undoing of "Help" (stick around). Her first song is Rod Stewart's wife-murdering nightmare "Foolish Behaviour," and Tina rips its head off. Presumably, the Devil kept to his lake that night.

More ingredients: chutzpah, irony.

That energy could work a crowd, get it to say "*yeah*" and "oh" and "ooh" just for her, get it screaming back at her. Tina was an average height — 5-foot-4, *maybe*. But here's where a scale fails. Put her in an arena, she scraped the sky.

I've seen the footage of what happens when thousands of people take her in at once, often mostly white people — in London, in Osaka, in Sweden and Los Angeles. I've heard them on "Tina Live in Europe," from 1988. And I cry. They just lose their minds over her, this Black woman raised in the hollows and back roads of Tennessee, in Nutbush. It's something — to witness her enthrall masses, to rock them; to see an "Oprah" audience go bonkers with awe, as if she were a wonder of the world.



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What is that? It's the survival — of poverty, of Ike, of tuberculosis she didn't know she had. It's the hard-won freedom. It's the way the songs promised she'd survive: "It's Gonna Work Out Fine." But there's more: She loved herself, loved being herself. We wanted to catch ourselves some of that. Page 133 of "I, Tina": "I got to thinking that maybe I was such a mixture of things that it was beyond black-or-white, beyond just cultures — that I was universal!"

Arena Tina, Universal Tina, is the Turner I got: "Private Dancer," "What's Love Got to Do with It" Tina. The first time I saw *her* was probably "Friday Night Videos" when I was 8. And here was this long-looking woman in a leather miniskirt, stockings, heels, a denim jacket and hair as imposing as a lion's head. Little me wanted to be her strutting down the street in that "What's Love" video, one leg almost completely crossing the other. She looked *bad*, certain of her badness, strong — but also soft, the way she'd lean back into a dancer and shimmy with his buddy then shimmy with another dude. When she won all those Grammys in 1985, I wanted to sound like the woman accepting them. Was it continental-southern? Caribbean-showbiz?

This was a new Tina, polished, spiritual, with a devastatingly elegant repossession of image and voice. Her renaissance constituted a statement of command — those weren't wigs up there, they were headdresses. That energy — it had been reinterpreted as wisdom, wisdom that snarled, wisdom that would rule Thunderdome. The lava had cooled some. The smooth fire in this new life and sound of hers — rock 'n' roll with pop's synth sheen — had a musical point: "Show Some Respect," "Better Be Good to Me." So we did, so we never stopped.

It just occurred to me what else "I, Tina" is. I've read this book ratty, but I'd really never thought about that title. It's a declaration, yes, the staking of a claim. It's also the beginning of a vow. To live, I think. To live so fully, so galactically, so contagiously, with so much daring, candor, zest and, yes, energy that no one is ever going to believe it when you die.

HBO Calls 'The Idol' Sleazy. You Be the Judge.

Controversy swirls in Cannes over a sex-filled show that was reworked by Sam Levinson.

By KYLE BUCHANAN

CANNES, FRANCE — In March, Rolling Stone published an article detailing the trouble-plagued production of "The Idol," a new HBO drama from the "Euphoria" creator Sam Levinson. According to the magazine, nearly 80 percent of the show, about a pop singer (Lily-Rose Depp) who falls under the spell of a Svengali figure (the Weeknd), had been filmed with the director Amy Seimetz before Levinson stepped in to rewrite and reshoot the entire thing. As a result, one crew member said, it had transformed from a music-industry satire into a "rape fantasy" in which Depp's character must endure a series of demeaning sex acts.

At the Cannes Film Festival, where two episodes premiered this week, Levinson was asked what he made of the report.

"When my wife read me the article," Levinson said, "I looked at her and said, 'I think we're about to have the biggest show of the summer.'"

When it comes to controversy, Levinson and his collaborators have clearly decided to lean in: Even HBO's marketing for "The Idol" calls it the "sleaziest love story in all of Hollywood." At times, the show seems reverse-engineered to generate think-pieces and indignant tweet-storms; if attention is oxygen, Levinson seems to have calculated that "The Idol" will burn brighter as long as people keep talking about it. Reviews from Cannes have been poor, but as long as they mention the outrageous scenarios and envelope-pushing sex scenes, won't you be tempted to tune in?

Is "The Idol" really as sleazy as has been promised/warned? Let me try to summarize the first two episodes, and you be the judge.

The show begins with Depp's pop star, Jocelyn, posing for a photo shoot, naked but for a barely cinched robe and a hospital wristband. The latter is a wink at rumors that Jocelyn experienced a nervous breakdown after her mother's death, but it's also meant to be a come-on, explains Nikki (Jane Adams), a cynical record executive: If men think Jocelyn is a little crazy, they might imagine they have the chance to bed her.

Almost immediately, Jocelyn's team is hit with twin crises. The first seems tailor-made to get the internet's goat: Jocelyn's robe keeps falling away to reveal her nipples, and a buzzkill intimacy coordinator keeps trying to halt the session, no matter how often Jocelyn and her team explain they're fine with it. Eventually, Jocelyn's manager, Chaim (Hank Azaria), locks the intimacy coordinator in a bathroom.

As all of that is going on, a photo is leaked online that shows Jocelyn with sexual fluids on her face. But she seems utterly unbothered. Is this because she is so sexually self-possessed that she can't be shamed? Given that she takes sensual showers while wearing false eyelashes and full makeup, it may owe more to Levinson's depiction of the character as an always-on male fantasy.

VIANNEY LE CAER/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Weeknd, left, Lily-Rose Depp and Sam Levinson, the "Euphoria" showrunner who's also behind their new HBO series, "The Idol."

That night, freewheeling Jocelyn heads to a nightclub, where she meets Tedros, the establishment's mysterious owner, played by the Weeknd (the series co-creator, born Abel Tesfaye, who is so flatteringly lit that he often looks more like an A.I. rendering). There is an instant connection between the two for reasons not depicted onscreen, and it isn't long before they get together in a stairwell, an encounter she later thinks of at home while engaging in a bout of autoerotic asphyxiation.

Jocelyn's assistant (Rachel Sennott) is not a fan of this blossoming union: "He's so rapey," she tells Jocelyn. "I kind of like it," replies the star, who invites Tedros to her mansion to hear her next single. He expertly negs Jocelyn, telling her the song isn't sung with any sexual authority, but he has a plan for that: After running a tumbler of ice down Jocelyn's frequently bare sternum, he pulls her robe over her head, chokes her with its belt, uses a switchblade to cut a mouth-hole in the material (the things this poor robe has been through in only one episode!) and orders Jocelyn to sing.

In the second episode, Jocelyn proudly presents this orgasmic remix to her horrified team. Told it's too late to make changes, Jocelyn is dismayed but still manages to add a cold tumbler to her usual afternoon solo sex session. A girl has needs, after all.

But when Jocelyn shows up for a video shoot, makeup artists have to cover the cuts and bruises on her inner thighs that remain from that session. This makes her late to set, where she eventually dissolves into a crying mess. This *also* means that she's particularly vulnerable to the machinations of Tedros, who kindly leaves a shock-collar orgy to move his entourage into Jocelyn's mansion and engage in more kinky sex with her. There's a lot of dirty talk so grossly delivered by the Weeknd that you may need to mute and switch to closed captioning when the show premieres on June 4.

Is it all a little too much? Of course, and that's the point. At the news conference for "The Idol," Levinson was asked how he calibrated the sex scenes and near-constant nudity without going too far. For a second, he looked confused.

"Sometimes," Levinson said, "things that might be revolutionary *are* taken too far."

A Director Observes A Blueprint

Wes Anderson's 'Asteroid City' employs a familiar set of tools.

By KYLE BUCHANAN

VITTORIO ZUNINO CELOTTO/GETTY IMAGES

From left, Tom Hanks, Scarlett Johansson, Wes Anderson and Jason Schwartzman at the Cannes Film Festival on Tuesday for Anderson's "Asteroid City."

CANNES, FRANCE — Wes Anderson's directorial style is so distinctive and particular — so *Wessy* — that it has spawned no end of recent A.I. parodies. But how do those imitations compare with the real thing?

Many of Anderson's signature obsessions are on display in his new movie, "Asteroid City," a comedy about different sets of parents in the 1950s accompanying their space-obsessed kids to a convention in the desert, where they all must quarantine together after receiving an unexpected visitor from the skies. (Strained family dynamics, nerdy children and whimsical settings . . . check, check, check!)

Critics appeared split on the movie after its Cannes Film Festival premiere on Tuesday: Although "Asteroid City" got glowing notices in The Telegraph and IndieWire, Variety deemed it "for Anderson die-hards only." That suggests this is his Wessiest movie yet, a case that could certainly be made when you consider the following:

It's filled with his favorite actors.

The expansive cast includes several Anderson regulars, including Jason Schwartzman as a war photographer and Tilda Swinton as a kooky astronomer, plus Jeffrey Wright, Edward Norton, Adrien Brody, Liev Schreiber and Tony Revolori. Scarlett Johansson, previously called on to do a voice in Anderson's stop-motion "Isle of Dogs," gets her first live-action role for the director as a self-absorbed actress who finds herself quarantined next door to Schwartzman. Only two Anderson veterans are missing: Bill Murray, who was originally cast in "Asteroid City" but reportedly had to drop out because of Covid-19, and Owen Wilson.

There are big stars in small roles.

Actors clamor to star in Anderson's films, and he takes full advantage: Even the tiniest supporting roles are typically filled with heavy hitters (as in "The French Dispatch," where the Emmy winner Elisabeth Moss is essentially a featured extra). "Asteroid City" welcomes the A-lister Tom Hanks into the fold as Schwartzman's father-in-law, though he's not as significant a presence as you might expect. Still, at least he's got more to do than the "Barbie" star Margot Robbie and Hong Chau, a recent Oscar nominee, who each pop in for the briefest of cameos. In future Anderson films, maybe they'll be upgraded to the main ensemble.

It's got a complicated framing device.

Anderson's films often call attention to their own storytelling by nesting the narrative within another narrative: Perhaps it's all taking place in a book, or the vignettes are stories in a magazine. In "Asteroid City," the director indulges in his most complicated construction yet: We're meant to be watching a TV broadcast (hosted by Bryan Cranston) that dramatizes the story of a playwright (Norton) who wrote an unproduced stage production called "Asteroid City." Those framing segments are shot in black and white. It's only when we leap into the *idea* of his play that Anderson transports us to the gorgeous teals and burnt oranges of the desert, where most of this story within a story (within a story!) unfolds.

It all takes place on rigid lines.

Though Anderson has become less fixated on placing his actors in the smack-dab middle of the frame, he still blocks his camera movements and choreography in "Asteroid City" so that everything and everybody moves on an x or y axis at all times. (If you want to sneak up on someone in a Wes Anderson movie, do it diagonally. They'd never think to look!)

There are deadpan expressions of grief.

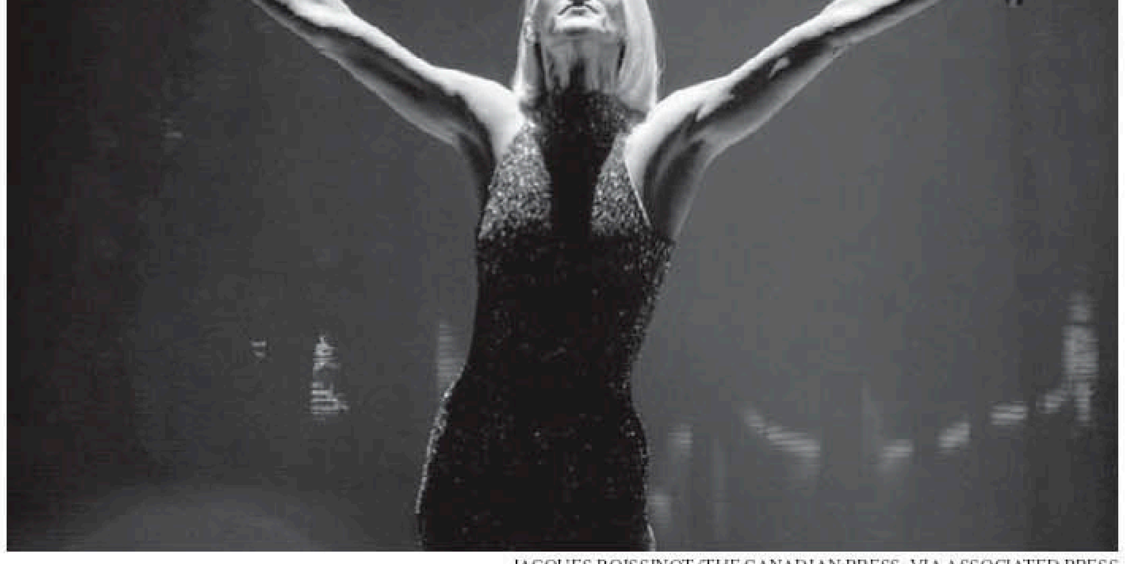
Schwartzman's war photographer has something he's meaning to tell his children: Their mother has died. Or, more specifically, their mother died three weeks ago and he just hasn't found the right moment to bring it up. The situation is outrageous, but Schwartzman's performance is classic Wes deadpan, and though most of the cast members give the same steady line readings, that house style is at its best when you can sense real, troubled currents underneath a placid exterior.

But it could have been even Wessier . . .

If, after reading all this, you think "Asteroid City" couldn't get more Wessy . . . well, it could! At the film's Cannes news conference on Wednesday, the actor Steve Park said that before shooting began, Anderson created a feature-length, animated storyboard, or animatic, in which he did all the voices himself. "Release the animatics," Jeffrey Wright intoned solemnly.

. . . especially if it used slow-motion.

Later in the news conference, a reporter confronted Anderson about one trademark that's disappeared: Though he used to use slow-motion sequences fairly often — think Gwyneth Paltrow dramatically exiting her bus in "The Royal Tenenbaums" — recent films like "Asteroid City" have all but dropped the device. "I have a series of ways I like to stage things and I don't know if I'm in command of them — it's part of my personality," Anderson said, before growing concerned. "That's one of the tools that I've used often, and I should look for some spots for that," he promised the reporter. "I'll take the note. And I'll do it!"



JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Celine Dion in 2019. The singer's interrupted tour is now officially over.

Celine Dion Cancels the Rest of Her Tour

The pop star is dealing with the effects of a rare disease.

By MAYA SALAM

The powerhouse pop superstar Celine Dion announced Friday morning on social media that she was canceling the remainder of her Courage World Tour through April 2024 in order to focus on her recovery from a rare autoimmune and neurological disease.

Dion, 55, first shared publicly that she was grappling with the medical condition — called stiff person syndrome, which causes progressive stiffness and severe muscle spasms — in an emotional Instagram video that she posted in December 2022, as she canceled or postponed a number of tour dates.

"I am so sorry to disappoint all of you once again," Dion said in the statement on Friday. "I'm working really hard to build back my strength, but touring can be very difficult even when you're 100 percent. It's not fair to you to keep postponing the shows, and even though it breaks my heart, it's best that we cancel everything now until I'm really ready to be back onstage again. I want you all to know, I'm not giving up . . . And I can't wait to see you again!"

The remaining 2023 tour dates had been scheduled to run from Aug. 26 in Amsterdam through Oct. 4 in Helsinki, Finland; then from March 6, 2024, in Prague through April 22, 2024, in London. Tickets purchased for the canceled dates can be refunded via the original point of sale, according to the statement.

Before the pandemic paused Dion's tour in March 2020, she had completed the first 52 dates of the tour, in North America. "Unfortunately, these spasms affect every aspect of my daily life sometimes causing difficulties when I walk and not allowing me to use my vocal cords to sing the way I am used to," she said in the video posted last year.

Dion can be seen in her first feature movie role, alongside Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Sam Heughan, in the romantic comedy-drama "Love Again," which was released this month.

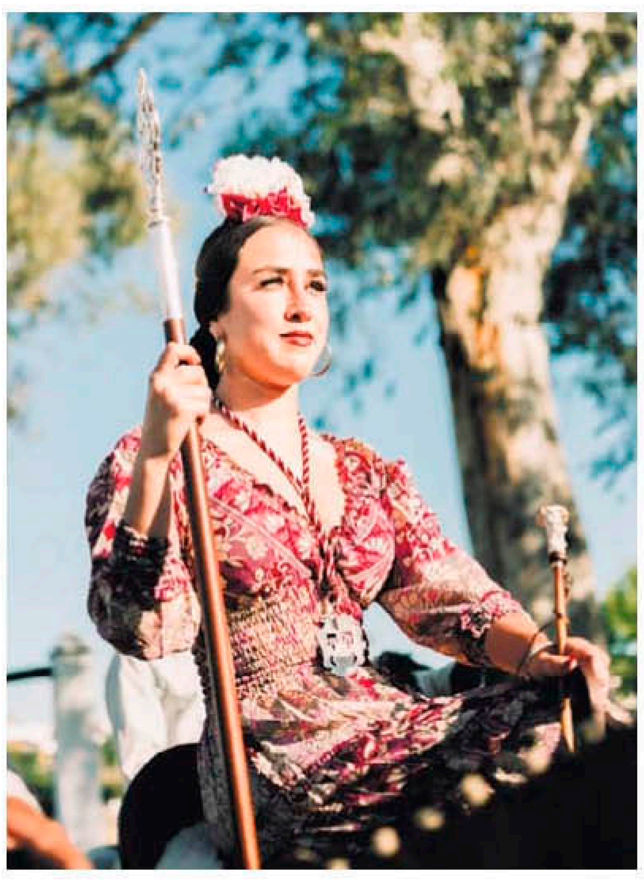
After the announcement of her illness last year, Dion, known for her renditions of ballads like "Because You Loved Me" and "My Heart Will Go On," was met with a remarkable outpouring from fans, particularly in Quebec, the French-speaking Canadian province where Dion was born.

Travel

THE WORLD THROUGH A LENS

Riding Along on Spain's El Rocío Pilgrimage

The annual spectacle is a potent visual representation of Andalusian culture.



Top, the Hermandad del Rocío de Sevilla — the House of the Brotherhood of Seville — in the village of El Rocío. Above from left: pilgrims on a horseback ride through Doñana National Park; women traditionally wear brightly colored flamenco dresses for the pilgrimage; a young equestrian wears traditional hat, high-waisted paseo trousers and cropped guayabera jacket; above right, the arrival of the Huelva hermandad in El Rocío is applauded by spectators; right, the sun sets on another long day on the road.

Photographs by KEVIN FAINGNAERT
Article by ANNA HART

"You can't wear that flamenco dress for the El Rocío pilgrimage, Bonita," Maria Cárdenas, our Airbnb host, said with a laugh. "You'll die in the heat."

She pinched the thick red fabric between her thumb and held it up to my face like a specimen. "You see? Heavy tight dresses like this are made for the festivals at the bullring in Seville city," she explained. "You need lightweight stretchy polyester for pilgrimages — for riding, walking, dancing, siestas in the grass."

The El Rocío pilgrimage is a high-octane religious spectacle — a multiday annual fiesta, held in Andalusia, the southernmost region in Spain — of flamenco dresses, caravans and religious fervor that seems to grow ever stronger, despite the ever-waning influence of the Catholic Church.

Participants can spend months in preparation: planning menus, hiring tractors, arranging for caravans. It also requires the selection of a dress that permits the wearer to relieve herself behind a bush while exuding all the elegance of Goya's Duchess of Alba.

Having studied for a year in Seville in 2012, Kevin, my collaborator, has long dreamed of returning to document the pilgrimage of El Rocío, which was canceled for two consecutive years during the pandemic. My connection to Spain is more recent: I moved to Mallorca last year after deciding that life is too short not to live on a Mediterranean island. Kevin and I regularly work together on travel assignments, and when he told me about El Rocío, it was an easy yes, because the best way to get to know a new country is to party with it.

Although we were documenting the 2022 pilgrimage (this year's will be held at the end of May), we were also participating in a celebration. Andalusia — famed for flamenco dancing, cowboy culture and pilgrimages — has a distinct and seductive identity that people in the south of Spain are rightly proud of.

The El Rocío pilgrimage is arguably the most potent visual representation of Andalusian culture, and it's this, as much as religious zeal, that propels hundreds of thousands of pilgrims toward the shrine of the Virgin in the village of El Rocío. Some travel on foot, others atop elaborately decorated caravans. Many are on horseback: stiff-backed and spiffily attired riders in wide-brimmed hats, high-waisted paseo trousers and cropped guayabera jackets.

On our first day, Kevin and I wandered through Doñana National Park, some 40 minutes south of central Seville, foraging for the pilgrims we were assured would be there. Eventually we heard the faint tinkle of cowbells, the clap of horses' hooves, creaking caravan wheels, the strains of flamenco guitar, voices singing in unison. Within minutes, the dusty road had transformed into a festival. Caravans rolled past. Pilgrims pressed bottles of Cruzcampo beer and slices of cured Ibérico ham into our hands. The singing reached a crescendo.

In Spain, Catholicism is taken seriously. But so is beer, ham and cheese — even at 10 a.m.

Many Andalusian cities, towns and villages developed their own pilgrimages — known as romerías, so named because pilgrims traditionally walked to Rome — dedicated to their particular patron saints. But the four-day walk to El Rocío has achieved cult status.

According to legend, a statue of the Virgin Mary was discovered in a tree trunk many hundreds of years ago, in the marshes of the Guadalquivir River. For a couple of centuries, devotion to this shrine was confined to the surrounding towns of Almonte and Villamanrique de la Condesa. But by the 20th century, in celebration of Pentecost, hermandades (brotherhoods) of pilgrims were walking up to four days to get to the area — from the area surrounding Seville and Huelva, and eventually beyond Andalusia, from Madrid, Barcelona and the Balearic and Canary Islands. At night, the hermandades would camp in the forest, dine together at long tables and dance flamenco around campfires until the reality of the next day's 15-mile hike couldn't be ignored.

Kevin and I share an obsession with international festivals. His impulse is to capture portraits, mine is to listen and learn. But wherever we go, Kevin and I tend to fixate on the faces.

At El Rocío, no faces were closed to outsiders. We were invited into caravans; told to sit and eat stew and sliced watermelon; dragged into flamenco dances; and instructed to take a siesta after lunch in the grass — otherwise we'd "never survive until Sunday," one participant told us. No one we encountered was reluctant to be interviewed or photographed. Everyone seemed to accept that El Rocío is a spectacle. Our amazement and curiosity was received as a sign of respect.

We joined the caravans in the muddy waters at Quema, a ford in the Guadiamar River, a tributary of the Guadalquivir. In the town of Villamanrique de la Condesa, every restaurant and bar was spilling over with spectators. (El Rocío is televised like a sporting event throughout Spain.)

By Friday night, the first of the hermandades arrived in El Rocío, a tiny town that reminded me of Western movie sets I've seen in California and Arizona. Its character is entirely shaped by the pilgrimage; the more prominent hermandades — like Huelva, with its 10,000 pilgrims — own huge boardinghouses at the edge of town, with convent-like rooms and vast communal dining and dancing areas. The smaller hermandades just look for short-term rentals. Even with our beginner's Spanish, we were ushered inside a whitewashed house and given beer, chunks of manchego cheese and slices of cured ham. It struck me that most Spanish culinary staples are essentially pilgrim food: controlled decay turned into a delicacy.

Lots of fervor among the flamencos of a multiday fiesta.

In El Rocío, we found religious fervor in the streets, in the Churro shacks, in the hermandades themselves. But there was also fervor for fervor itself. I'm the Irish daughter of a Presbyterian pastor, raised on no-frills religious celebrations; tea and a scone is as decadent as Presbyterian celebrations get. In El Rocío, I found myself intoxicated by the pageantry and rituals, and by the idea that a pilgrimage can and should also be a source of revelry.

Friday night melted into Saturday morning, and Kevin and I found ourselves chatting with two young friends from Madrid — in their 30s, like us. Young people used to want to escape from religious traditions, they told us. But El Rocío offers them an escape, they said, from the stresses of modern life.

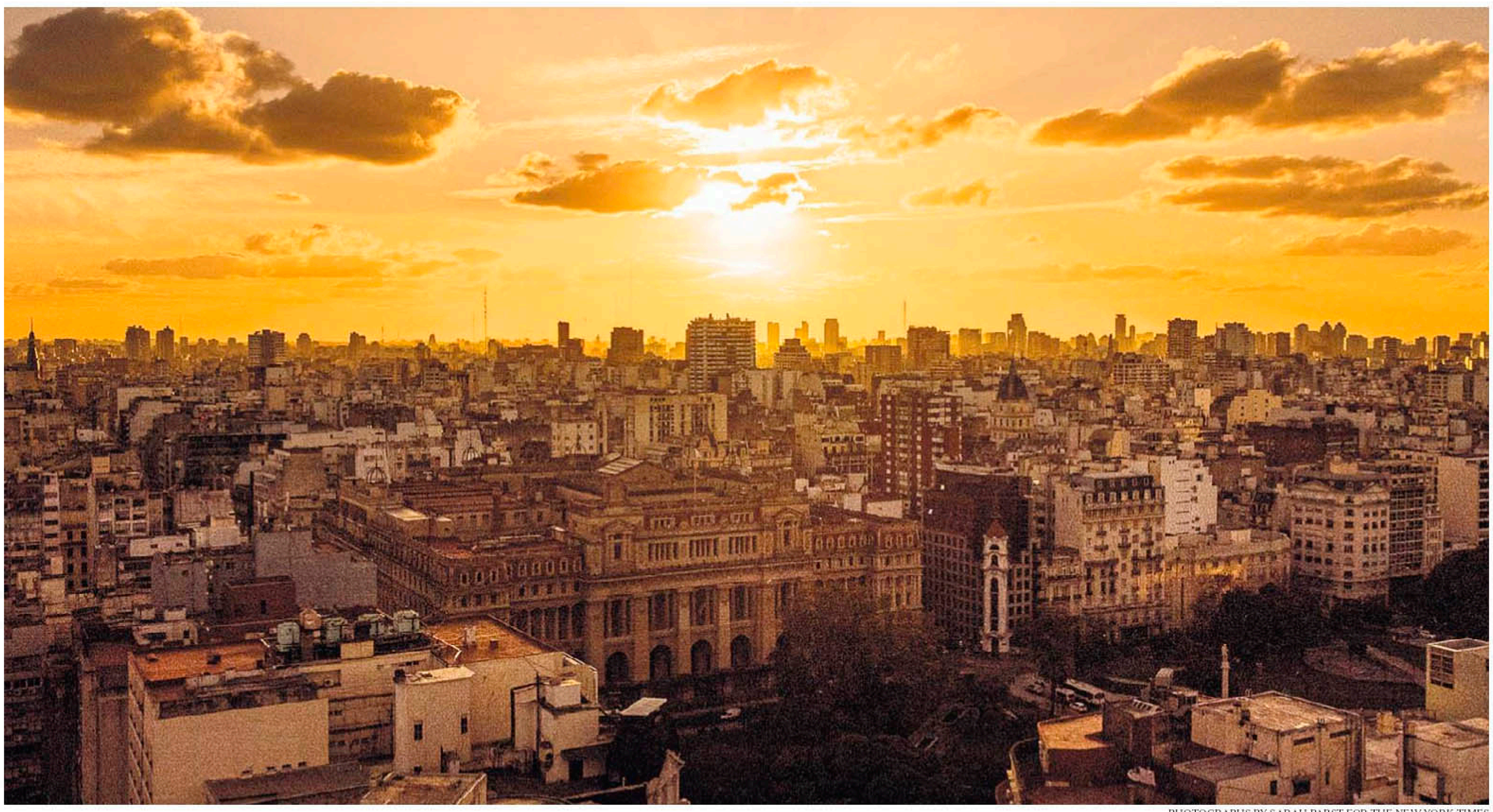
"I love El Rocío, because it's the one time of the year that my whole family gets together — no excuses," said Carmen Mora, 32, who works for a travel tech start-up. "It's healthy to forget about city life for a week — my city clothes, the technology, my job, the pressure."

"It's good for the spirit to be immersed in tradition," she added.

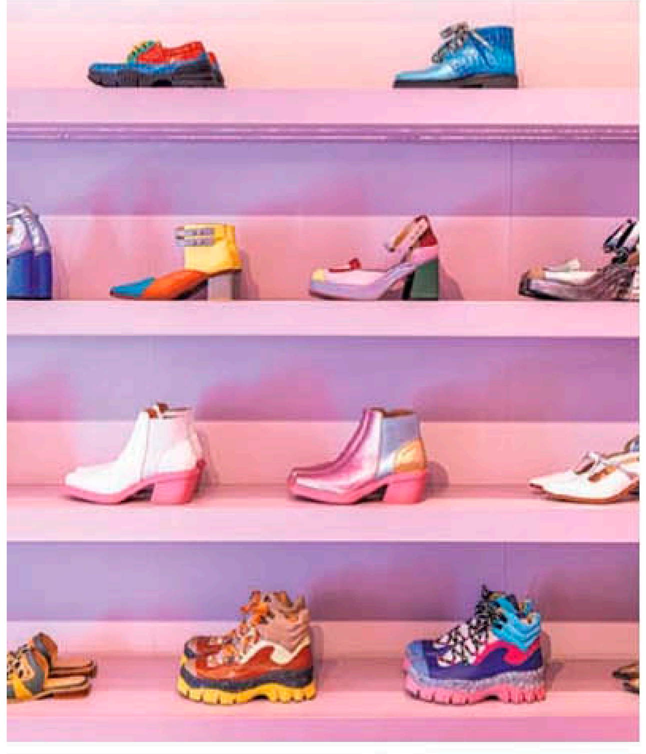
36 HOURS

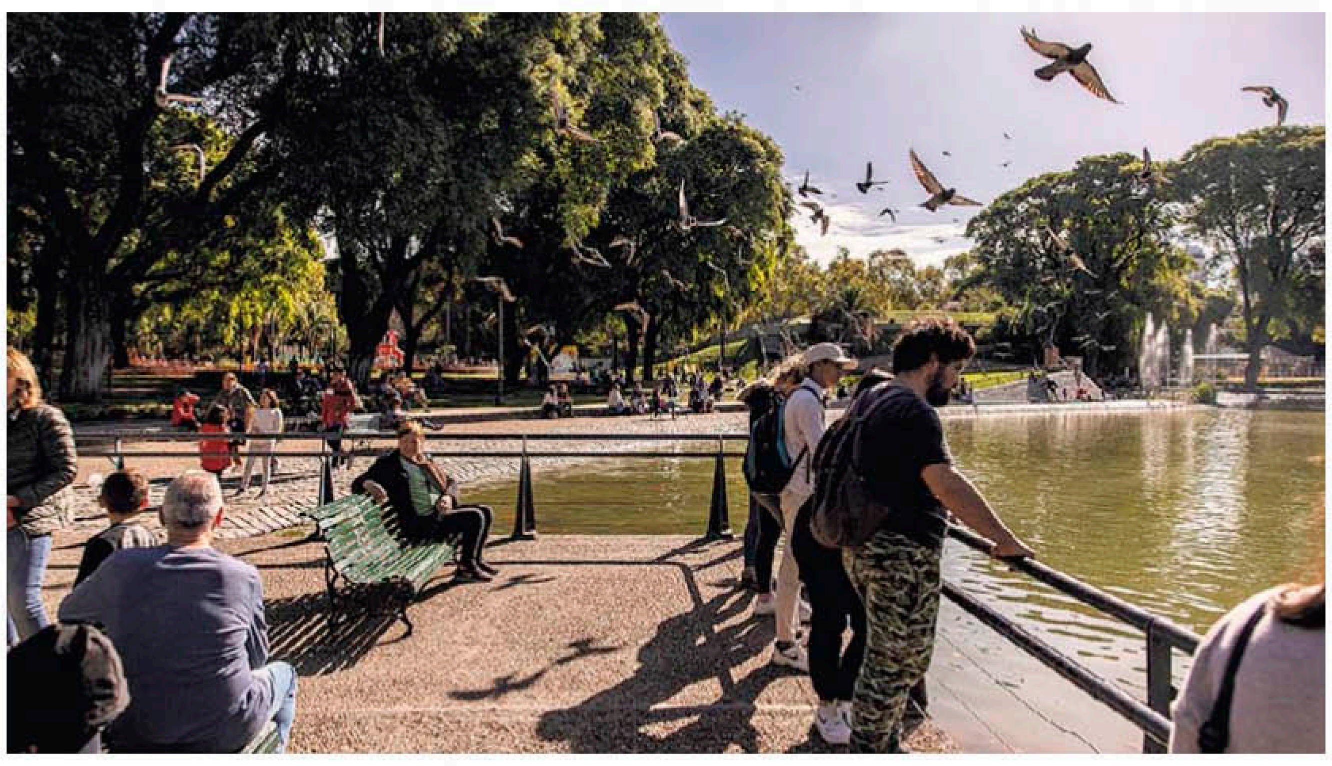
BUENOS AIRES

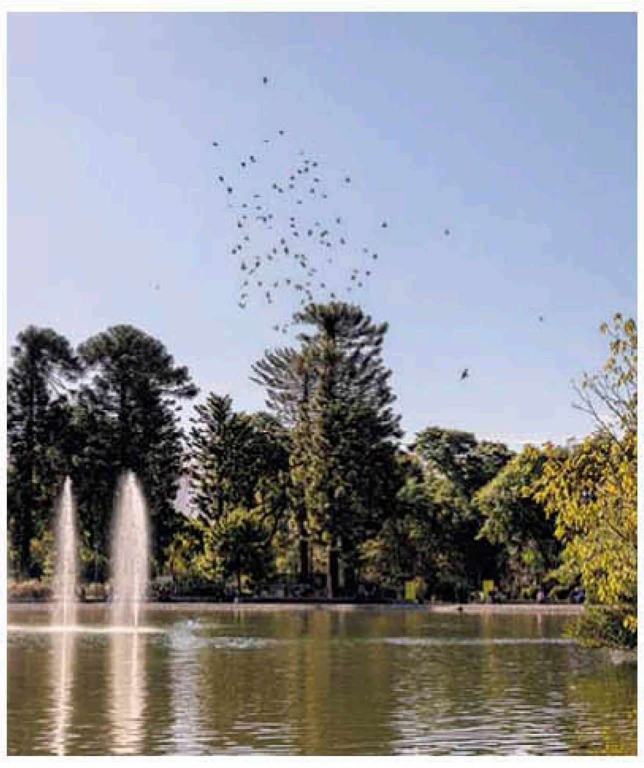
Buenos Aires, Argentina's capital, can feel overwhelming. Main thoroughfares like Avenida Santa Fe are noisy and jammed with zooming taxis and groaning buses. The streets can get grimy. But elegance is everywhere and accessible to visitors. Beaux-Arts buildings along Avenida de Mayo recall the grandeur of old Europe. You can find affordable, handcrafted goods at artisan fairs that abound on weekends in neighborhoods like San Telmo, Recoleta and Mataderos. The afterglow of Argentina's 2022 World Cup victory remains — a spiritual salve for many still suffering from the country's yearslong inflation crisis. Visitors will find a city where people press on. It is that perseverance that keeps Buenos Aires vibrant and thrilling. *MARIA CRAMER*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SARAH PABST FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES







Top, the sun setting on Buenos Aires. Center from left: shoes at display at Jessica Kessel on Calle Montevideo; Parque Centenario. Above from left: the 19th-century Palacio de las Aguas Corrientes, which is the city's water pumping station; another view of Parque Centenario.

Friday

4:30 P.M. | BEAUTY IN TOILETS

One unexpected place to enjoy Buenos Aires's breathtaking architecture: the city's water pumping station. The striking 19th-century Palacio de las Aguas Corrientes, which takes up an entire block in the Balvanera neighborhood, has an inelegant nickname — the Toilet Museum. It has the moniker because of its large collection of latrines and ornate urinals, including an enormous room showcasing 20th-century toilets and bidets. But the building itself is a beautiful example of the French influence on the city's architecture. A visit to its museum, which is free and open Monday through Friday, could take 15 minutes or an hour, depending on how much you care to learn about the history of indoor plumbing.

5:30 P.M. | SHOE SHOPPING

In the affluent neighborhood of Recoleta, merchants selling high-quality Argentine leather are within easy walking distance of one another. Visit stalwarts like Guido on Calle Rodríguez Peña and Lopez Taibo on Avenida Alvear, where the shoes, wallets and purses are handmade and the strong aroma of fine leather hits you as you walk through the door. For funkier shoes with colorful designs on Calle Montevideo, go to Jessica Kessel, which also has a shop on Calle Defensa in San Telmo (shoes from 36,000 pesos). After shopping, grab some buttery, sweet medialunas (Argentina's spin on croissants) from Corchio on Avenida Las Heras and walk five blocks to Plaza Vicente López, where you will gaze in wonder at an enormous 200-year-old rubber fig tree in the center of the park.

8:30 P.M. | EAT AN ARGENTINE FEAST

To taste your way around Argentina, South America's second-biggest nation, without taking a long trek, go to Roux, also in Recoleta. While the food isn't strictly Argentine, the chef Martin Rebaudino, who made a name for himself at the nearby fine-dining restaurant Oviedo, sources ingredients from all over the country: The anchovies are from the coastal city of Mar del Plata, the saffron is from the northwest province of Mendoza, and the prawns are from Santa Cruz, in Patagonia. The mollejas, or sweetbreads, served with a large, velvety raviolo that has a truffled egg yolk inside and is topped with foam, are a highlight on a menu full of inventive dishes. The wine list is vast, and the service is impeccable. Dinner for two, without drinks, around 24,000 pesos.

11 P.M. | DRINK FROM AN OBELISK

After dinner, head less than a mile to Presidente Bar, which might look exclusive and imposing as you walk through a tall, wrought-iron gate into a dimly lit room with high ceilings, mahogany-colored walls and crystal chandeliers. But the place is run by friendly, knowledgeable servers who will happily go into detail about the cocktails, which range from traditional Negronis to kitschy inventions like the Buenos Aires Zombie, a rum cocktail mixed with tropical fruit, absinthe and bitters served in a ceramic replica of the obelisk on Avenida 9 de Julio. Presidente Bar offers a gorgeous setting where dressing up is encouraged but pretentiousness is nonexistent.

Saturday

9 A.M. | COFFEE AND BOOKS

The hand-cut pasta at Quotidiano Bar de Pastas on Avenida Callao is so popular with locals that lines form outside on weekdays at lunchtime. But it is also a wonderful spot for breakfast — a large, airy setting of exposed brick and wood paneling where you can start off your day with strong coffee, housemade yogurt and granola, fresh-squeezed orange juice, avocado on toast, or flaky, sweet croissants (breakfast with coffee and juice from 700 to 2,150 pesos). After breakfast, stroll two blocks to the bustling Avenida Santa Fe, where you can visit El Ateneo Grand Splendid, a cinema turned bookstore that has kept the old movie house's high, frescoed ceilings, theater boxes and ornate molding.

11 A.M. | STROLL A FORMER ZOO

The Palermo neighborhood already had three sprawling gardens within walking distance of one another: Jardín Japones, Jardín Botánico and Parque El Rosedal. Add Ecoparque to that list. Once it was the site of a grand, and very sad, city zoo, where iron cages kept lions, tigers and chimpanzees in cruelly small spaces. The zoo closed in 2016, and since then, the new owners have been converting it into a peaceful nature preserve, where peacocks and Patagonian maras — native, fleet-footed rodents — roam free. While more exotic animals have been sent to sanctuaries abroad, some remain, including giraffes that are too large and old to transport and a puma that had been kept illegally as a pet. The zoo's gorgeous, antique buildings also remain, their stateliness now an elegant contrast to the wild native plants and brush growing along footpaths. Entry is free.

1 P.M. | GORGE ON PASTA

If there is one food that Porteños (the name for people from Buenos Aires) take almost as seriously as beef, it's pasta — a reverence rooted in the city's Italian heritage. At La Alacena Pastificio y Salumeria, which opened in 2022 just outside Villa Crespo, a neighborhood that borders trendy Palermo but is largely overlooked by tourists, you will find pasta makers behind a counter, expertly rolling out and cutting rigatoni, gnocchi and ravioli, to name a few. Try the housemade focaccia (900 pesos), the polpette al sugo (meatballs in tomato sauce flecked with shards of rich, sharp Parmesan, 2,700 pesos) and fusilli topped with pesto and pomodoro sauce (2,400 pesos). The full kitchen is open only until 4:30 p.m., but the counter stays open until 9 p.m., selling bread, pastries and sandwiches.

3 P.M. | WATCH THE KOI

Work off your meal with a 20-minute walk to Parque Centenario in Caballito. The park, an oasis of trees like tipa and araucarias, sprawling lawns, and a lake filled with koi — the enormous fish that also fill the waterways of Jardín Japones in Palermo — is teeming with locals reading, painting or working out on Saturdays. It also has one of the quirkiest fairs in the city, featuring vendors lined up around its outskirts who sell secondhand clothes, water bottles emblazoned with pictures of Harry Styles and Taylor Swift, and jerseys and socks bearing the names and numbers of Argentina's soccer heroes. Inside the park, artists sell handmade goods like leather sandals, toys, children's clothes, intricate wooden puzzles, woolen scarves and jewelry, among other treasures.

7 P.M. | SCOPE OUT THE MARKET

At Mercat Villa Crespo, a market in an industrial space on Calle Thames, you'll find shops cooking traditional Argentine fare like empanadas, steak and pasta, as well as cooks steaming dumplings or frying falafel doused in a spicy eggplant sauce. There are plenty of vegetarian options, including vegan ice cream. Alongside the diverse food, there are also wine bars and draft beer stands throughout the cavernous, yet casual and relaxing, space. Open until 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

11 P.M. | LISTEN TO JAZZ IN PALERMO

Palermo Soho and Palermo Hollywood, two adjoining neighborhoods, are known for their trendy bars and nightclubs that stay open until dawn. But both also feature laid-back spots where you can enjoy the city's nightlife without sacrificing sleep. Borges 1975, a restaurant, bar and bookshop that opened in 2015, has a small, intimate back room that regularly features jazz acts by talented local musicians. During the pandemic, the owners reduced capacity in the club to 40 people, from 65, and kept it that way even after restrictions eased, recognizing that customers were more comfortable sipping Aperol spritzes and espumante (sparkling wine) in a less crowded setting. Tickets are 2,100 pesos.

Sunday

11 A.M. | GO UNDERGROUND

In San Telmo, you'll find one of the city's more unusual museums, El Zanjón, a cavernous mansion that leads to underground water tunnels built in the neighborhood in the 18th and 19th centuries. The house once belonged to a wealthy family, who also kept six enslaved men and women, before it was turned into a tenement home. Little is known about the enslaved residents, except brief, denigrating descriptions that the family logged, like their approximate age and height. But the museum and its guides, who lead tours in English and Spanish, have made a serious effort to explore the country's obscured history of slavery with stories and paintings depicting Afro-Argentines of that period. Just around the corner is La Casa Mínima, the narrowest house in Buenos Aires, which is also open to the public for tours (3,500 pesos for nonresidents).

12:30 P.M. | GOOD GRILL

Puerto Madero, a redeveloped dockside neighborhood about a 10-minute walk from San Telmo, has become one of the busiest tourist destinations in the city, thanks to landmarks like Puente de la Mujer, a sleek pedestrian bridge designed by the renowned architect Santiago Calatrava, and the ARA Presidente Sarmiento, a museum ship that bobs on the Río Darsena Sur river next to a long line of loud, packed restaurants. Less than half a mile farther along the river, away from the crowd, is Estilo Campo, a fantastic parrilla (an Argentine steakhouse, which literally means open grill) with river views and waiters wearing kerchiefs and belts in the style of gauchos, to the delight of tourists. But the expertly prepared chorizo, crispy sweetbreads and juicy skirt steak leave no doubt that you are in an authentic Argentine parrilla, and the wine list is expansive. Lunch for two is about 18,000 pesos.

KEY STOPS

Ecoparque, a former zoo, is now a nature preserve where many animals roam free.

Borges 1975 is a bookshop with a restaurant and bar, as well as an intimate back room that hosts jazz acts every week.

La Alacena Pastificio y Salumeria is a cozy restaurant where you can watch pasta makers rolling and cutting fresh rigatoni, gnocchi and ravioli.

Jessica Kessel is a boutique selling funky, colorful leather shoes, including heels, boots, mules and flats.

WHERE TO EAT

Roux offers inventive fine dining, with produce sourced from all over Argentina.

Estilo Campo, a steakhouse in Puerto Madero, serves expertly prepared chorizo and crispy sweetbreads away from the crowds along the Río de la Plata riverbank.

Mercat Villa Crespo is a food market in a refurbished industrial space selling empanadas, steak, falafel, vegan ice cream and more.

Quotidiano Bar de Pastas in Recoleta draws crowds for its pasta and is also a great spot for breakfast and Argentine pastries filled with dulce de leche.

Presidente Bar, in one of the most affluent parts of the city, is a beautiful drinking spot that manages not to take itself too seriously.

Corchio, which has sweet, buttery pastries and great coffee, is a perfect snack stop as you shop in Recoleta.

WHERE TO STAY

Alvear Palace Hotel in Recoleta remains one of the city's most elegant hotels, with a rooftop bar that has tremendous panoramic views of Buenos Aires. Doubles from around $370 (hotels generally list prices in U.S. dollars).

Ribera Sur Hotel in San Telmo, the city's oldest neighborhood, has comfortable, simply designed rooms that start at $95 a night, including an indulgent breakfast. It is two blocks from Calle Defensa, where every Sunday there is an open-air antiques market.

Malevo Muraña Hostel, a cheerful hostel in Palermo with a charming outdoor patio, offers shared dorms from about $40 a person and private rooms that fit up to four people from $140 a night. The hostel is on one of the quieter streets of a neighborhood that becomes very loud at night.

For **short-term rentals**, Recoleta and Palermo, safe, walkable neighborhoods teeming with boutiques, pasta shops, and cheese and wine shops, are the best locations for exploring such a vast city.

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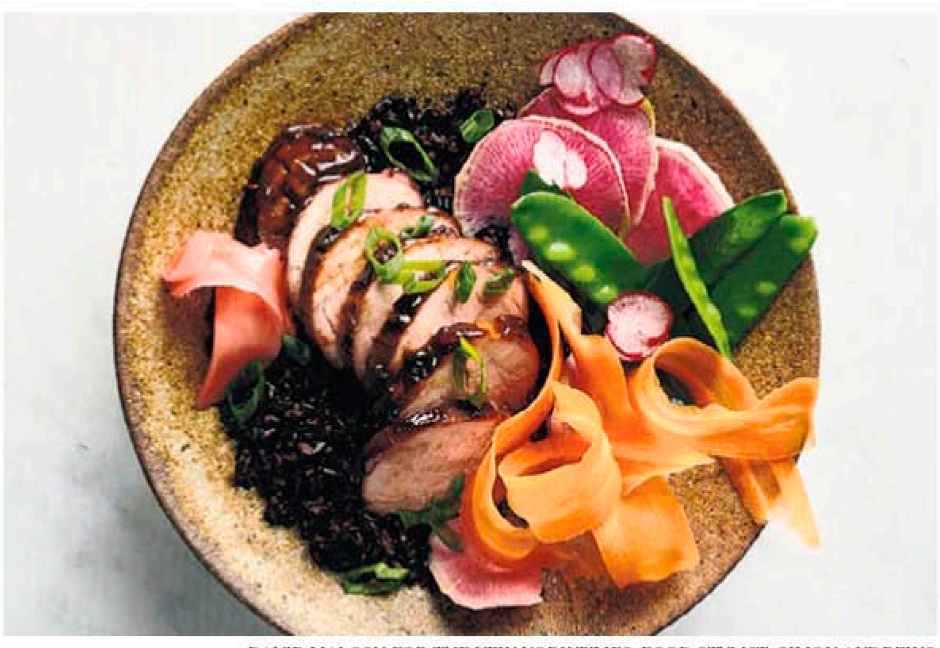
Cooking

What to Make Next Week

We have entered those mercurial weeks that guide us to summer solstice. Stretches of chilly rain aren't out of the question, but neither are days in which the heat of the coming season arrives at the door earlier than expected. So, for next week, think of the cold noodles with tomatoes and the edamame pesto pasta as mild nods to springtime's end. Meanwhile, the spicy heat in the black pepper stir-fried tofu and asparagus, the hoisin-glazed pork bowl with vegetables, and the sheet-pan roast chicken with tangy greens are a delicious reminder that balmy days are on the way.

Visit NYT Cooking for thousands more recipes, advice and inspiration: nytcooking.com



DAVID MALOSH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: SIMON ANDREWS.

Hoisin-Glazed Pork Bowl With Vegetables

Susan Spungen's ace recipe for a hoisin-glazed pork bowl with vegetables is good any day of the week. The glazed tenderloin is essentially a shortcut char siu, so if you (like me) know a char siu spot on your route home from the office, you might just buy some and use that in place of the tenderloin. Sneaky! *SAM SIFTON*

TIME: 40 MINUTES
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

- ½ cup hoisin sauce
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons Sriracha
- 1 large garlic clove, grated on a Microplane
- 1 teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder
- 1 pork tenderloin (about 1 to 1¼ pounds), cut crosswise into thirds
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 small carrots, peeled
- 2 large radishes (such as watermelon), or 4 small
- 4 scallions
- 1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
- 4 cups cooked brown or black rice
- 2 ounces snow peas, trimmed
- Pickled ginger (optional)

1. In a medium bowl, combine hoisin, ketchup, honey, ginger, sriracha, garlic and five-spice powder.

2. Season pork with ¾ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper, then add to the marinade. Toss to evenly coat, cover, and set aside. You can let the pork marinate, covered and refrigerated for up to 24 hours, or you can cook it right away.

3. Heat oven to 375 degrees. Heat oil in a large (12-inch) nonstick, oven-proof skillet over medium-high. Remove pork from marinade, letting excess drip back into the bowl. (Reserve marinade.) Sear pork for 2 to 3 minutes on the first side and about 2 minutes on the other, until nicely browned and caramelized.

4. Remove from heat and pour remaining marinade over the pork, turning to coat evenly. Transfer pan to the oven and cook, turning in the sauce occasionally, for 10 to 20 minutes, or until an instant-read thermometer reads 145 degrees. (The smallest piece of pork, from the thin end of the tenderloin will be done first, so begin checking temperature at 10 minutes and remove pieces from the oven as they are done.)

5. Meanwhile, prepare the vegetables: Use a peeler to shave the carrots lengthwise into strips. Slice the radishes paper-thin using a mandoline. Thinly slice the scallions on an angle.

6. Transfer pork to a plate and set aside to rest. Add rice wine vinegar and 2 tablespoons of water to the skillet and cook over medium-high, stirring constantly until you have a smooth sauce, adding more water if needed. It should be the consistency of heavy cream. Transfer to a small bowl, stirring in any juices that accumulated from the plate with the pork.

7. Distribute rice among 4 bowls. Thinly slice the pork and divide among the bowls. Drizzle the sauce over the pork and rice and garnish each bowl with the carrots, radishes, scallions, snow peas and pickled ginger, if using. Serve immediately.

JULIA GARTLAND FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: BARRETT WASHBURNE.

Cold Noodles With Tomatoes

Eric Kim's recipe for cold noodles with tomatoes is a magical cross between gazpacho and the Korean dish naengmyeon, and the perfect use of a pint of hothouse cherry tomatoes from the supermarket. "Just made this and mid-meal felt the urgent need to come here and rave about it," one reader noted on the recipe. "Super easy and super quick to make!" *SAM SIFTON*

TIME: 20 MINUTES
YIELD: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

- 2 pints ripe cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt (Diamond Crystal)
- 12 to 14 ounces somyeon, somen, capellini or other thin wheat noodle
- ¼ cup rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 large garlic clove, finely grated
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 2 cups cold filtered water
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds
- 2 radishes, thinly sliced
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced at an angle
- 2 cups crushed or cubed ice

1. In a large bowl, toss together the tomatoes and salt. Let sit until juicy, about 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook the noodles according to package instructions, drain and rinse under cold water. Set aside.

3. Add the vinegar, soy sauce, sugar, garlic, mustard and sesame oil to the tomatoes, and toss with a spoon until well combined. Stir the filtered water into the tomatoes and sprinkle the surface of the broth with the sesame seeds, radishes and scallions.

4. Right before serving, add the ice to the broth. Divide the noodles among bowls, and ladle in the broth and any unmelted ice, making sure each serving gets a nice sprinkling of tomatoes, radishes, scallions and sesame seeds.

KELLY MARSHALL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: BARRETT WASHBURNE.

Sheet-Pan Roast Chicken With Tangy Greens

To make this sheet-pan supper from Sarah Copeland, you first roast chicken leg quarters — which include both the drumstick and thigh, a feast for dark meat lovers — then toss and quickly roast kale and olives in the juices from the chicken. The effort-to-reward ratio is superb. *EMILY WEINSTEIN*

TIME: 55 MINUTES
YIELD: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 6 garlic cloves
- 1½ tablespoons curry powder
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt, plus more for finishing
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon red-pepper flakes
- 4 bone-in, skin-on chicken leg quarters (2½ to 3 pounds)
- 10 ounces chopped fresh kale leaves or other braising greens (about 6 packed cups)
- ½ cup pitted or unpitted green olives (optional)
- 2 tablespoons bread-and-butter pickle brine or apple cider vinegar

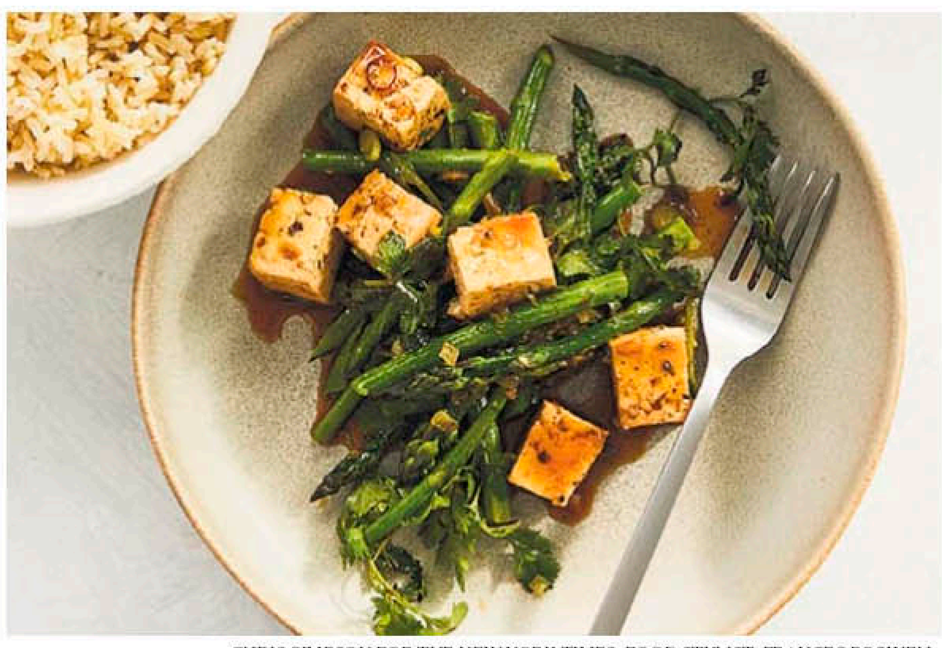
1. Heat the oven to 425 degrees and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. In a large bowl or heavy-duty resealable plastic bag, combine 3 tablespoons olive oil with the garlic, curry powder, salt, pepper and red-pepper flakes. Add chicken and toss well to coat. (If time allows, you can refrigerate the chicken in the marinade overnight, for deeper flavor.) Add one more tablespoon of oil if the chicken is lean or on the small side.

3. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet, laying the chicken legs skin-side up and scattering the garlic among them. Roast until golden brown and just cooked through, 30 to 40 minutes, turning the pan front to back once about halfway through cooking for even browning. (An instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh should read 165 degrees.)

4. Transfer the chicken to a platter or four plates to rest. Add the greens, olives (if using) and brine to the baking sheet; toss to coat in the cooking juices, then roast until wilted, bright green and slightly crispy on some of the edges, 5 minutes. Taste and season with more salt, if needed.

5. Serve the greens with the chicken, scraping any excess juices from the pan to drizzle over the top.



CHRIS SIMPSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: FRANCES BOSWELL.

Black Pepper Stir-Fried Tofu and Asparagus

More asparagus: Kay Chun's recipe for black pepper stir-fried tofu and asparagus is a controlled riot of flavors and textures, best made with pencil-thin spears (and snap peas to counter the heat of the sauce). Some substitute shrimp for the tofu. You do you. *SAM SIFTON*

TIME: 20 MINUTES
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

- 6 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons turbinado or light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce or a vegan alternative
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more for seasoning
- 1 pound firm tofu, cut into ½-inch cubes
- Kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil, such as safflower or canola
- 1 large shallot, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced peeled ginger
- 1 pound pencil-thin asparagus, woody ends trimmed, cut into thirds
- 4 ounces snap peas, thinly sliced on the diagonal
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped cilantro
- Steamed short-grain brown or white rice, for serving

1. In a small bowl, combine soy sauce, sugar, Worcestershire sauce, 1 teaspoon black pepper and 2 tablespoons of water. In a large nonstick skillet, combine tofu and half of the black pepper sauce, and season with salt. Bring to a simmer over medium heat and cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce has thickened and nicely coats the tofu, about 5 minutes. Slide glazed tofu and any sauce out onto a rimmed plate.

2. Wipe or rinse out the skillet and heat oil over medium. Add shallot and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 2 minutes. Add garlic and ginger, and stir until fragrant, 30 seconds. Add asparagus and snap peas, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until crisp-tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Add scallions, the remaining black pepper sauce and the tofu, and cook, stirring, until vegetables are evenly coated in the sauce. Stir in cilantro, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

3. Divide tofu and vegetables among plates and spoon over any remaining pan sauce. Serve with rice.

LINDA XIAO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: HADAS SMIRNOFF.

Edamame Pesto Pasta

Alert! This new alt-pesto from Hetty McKinnon is vegan and nut-free, making it deliciously amenable to various dietary needs. The recipe relies on frozen shelled edamame — which, like shrimp, is always in my freezer (my kids love it). *EMILY WEINSTEIN*

TIME: 30 MINUTES
YIELD: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

- Kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal) and black pepper
- 1 (12-ounce) package frozen shelled edamame
- 1 pound short pasta, such as fusilli, rigatoni or cavatappi
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1½ packed cups soft herbs such as basil, parsley or mint leaves (or a combination), plus more to serve
- ⅓ cup roasted unsalted sunflower or pumpkin seeds
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving
- 3 to 4 tablespoons lemon juice (from 1 to 2 lemons), plus more for serving
- 3 tablespoons nutritional yeast (or grated hard cheese like pecorino or Parmesan)
- Red-pepper flakes, to serve

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the edamame and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until just tender. Using a slotted spoon or ladle, remove the edamame and place in a colander. Rinse under cold water, then allow to drain and cool.

2. To the same water (top it up with hot tap water if needed), add the pasta. Cook according to package instructions.

3. Meanwhile, to a food processor or high-speed blender, add the cooled edamame, garlic, herbs and seeds and blitz for 8 to 10 seconds until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. With the motor running, trickle in the olive oil and 2 to 3 tablespoons of water, and blitz until it resembles a thick paste. (It doesn't need to be smooth, some texture is preferred.) Stir in 3 tablespoons lemon juice, nutritional yeast, 1 teaspoon of salt and a few pinches of black pepper. Taste and adjust salt and lemon juice until you are happy with the balance.

4. When the pasta is ready, reserve 2 cups of the cooking water and drain the pasta. Place the pot back on medium heat and add the edamame pesto, along with 1 cup of pasta cooking water. Stir until the pesto and water has emulsified, then add the pasta and stir to coat. If it looks dry, add just enough pasta cooking water for the sauce to look loose.

5. To serve, finish with a drizzle of olive oil, a squeeze of lemon juice, a scatter of red-pepper flakes and a few torn herbs.*